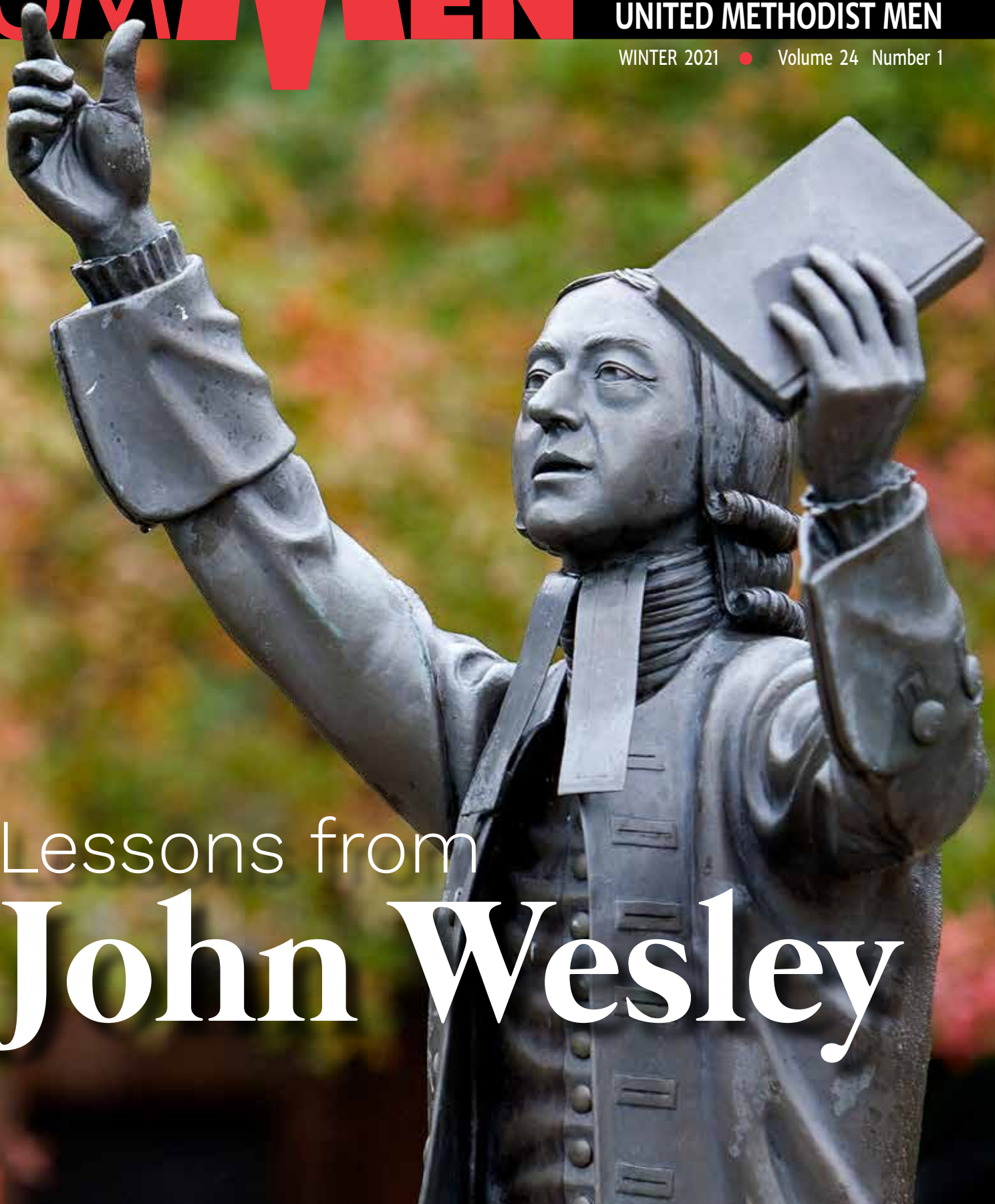


UM **MEN**

The magazine of
UNITED METHODIST MEN

WINTER 2021 • Volume 24 Number 1



Lessons from
John Wesley



GIL HANKE
General Secretary/
Chief Executive Officer

Knowing our roots

There are many new opportunities to learn about our personal histories. Many tools can reveal facts about our great-great-great grandparents, and multiple generations of cousins. Some of this information comes from sites that help us track our ancestors or analyze our DNA.

I have learned a great deal about our Methodist roots as I have led groups across the connection in The Class Meeting using *Kevin Watson's book* by the same title. These Wesleyan groups of 8 to 10 men help them become true disciples.

Many people are surprised to learn that while Wesley was successful, he also experienced failures and made a few miss-steps. The Class Meeting was actually a re-purposed approach to something that had failed.

By most measures, his time in the “colonies” was less than splendid, and his most significant spiritual experience did not take place within his faith community.

But the rest of the story that followed his “heart-warming” experience created a movement that forever changed England and the U.S. He and his brother, Charles, shared a passion for ministry with those who were lost in addiction to gin and other vices, to the poor, to the chronically ill, and to those in prison.

The Wesley brothers saw each day as a new opportunity to serve others.

The staff of the general commission continues to start additional Class Meetings via Zoom—–with remarkable results. If you wish to start one in your church, your district, or your annual conference, please contact me and we can help you make that happen.

Articles in this issue will inform you of our roots in Wesley and describe ministries that have thrived during a pandemic.

Let me know how we can serve you, and the men and youth of your church through the Centers for Men’s and Scouting Ministries.

In addition to all the materials we create, our goal (our “so-that” statement) is to make active, reproductive and engaged men of all ages who are gifted, on-growing disciples of Jesus Christ.

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This magazine includes articles from individuals who hold diverse opinions. We hope all articles are thought provoking; they are not necessarily the opinions of the General Commission on United Methodist Men. Articles without bylines are written by commission staff.

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REV. RICH PECK
Editor

This issue focuses on John Wesley

While it is tempting to idealize the founder of the Methodist Church, we recognize that while he had enormous spiritual strengths, he also had weaknesses. Some of the weaknesses were cultural and reflect 18th century understandings. Others were character flaws that reflect life priorities.

For example, while Wesley can teach us a great deal about self-discipline, I would be wary of following all of his medical advice found in his popular 119-page book, *Primitive Physick*. His goal of trying to provide safe, affordable, and easy medical care to poor and working-class people is admirable, but many of his suggestions would seem peculiar in 2020.



While I am bald, I must admit I never tried to follow Wesley's advice to rub my head with onions until it turns red. I also never tried to cure a burn with black varnish. And I suspect our children are grateful their mother didn't heed his advice to bathe them each morning in cold water until they were nine-months old.

In addition, while Wesley can teach us about the need to care for others, I would not want him to give us any advice on dating or marriage.

On his 1737 missionary journey to Georgia, Wesley fell in love with Sophy Hopkey, but he was torn by conflicts between love, duty, and the value of celibacy. His hot-and-cold relationship led the bewildered girl to marry someone else. Wesley subsequently refused to serve her Communion and that controversial action caused the less-than-successful missionary to take the next ship back to England.

Wesley later fumbled a relationship with Grace Murray and finally in 1751, he married Mary (Molly) Vazeille, a widow with four children. His routine travels away from his wife, resulted in a split in 1755. The couple got back together for a few years, but Molly left him for good in 1771 and died 10 years later.

While Wesley's life in England parallels events in the colonies that gave birth to the Declaration of Independence, Wesley opposed military action against England. In 1775, he wrote *A Calm Address to our American Colonies*, which criticized the colonists for their "no taxation without representation" stance. He argued that taxes were needed to provide military protection for the colonists against aggressive actions by France and Spain.

In spite of these difficulties and limitations, 229 years after his death, John Wesley still has much to teach us.

Read on.

Now, more than ever, we need the **POWER OF COMMUNICATION**

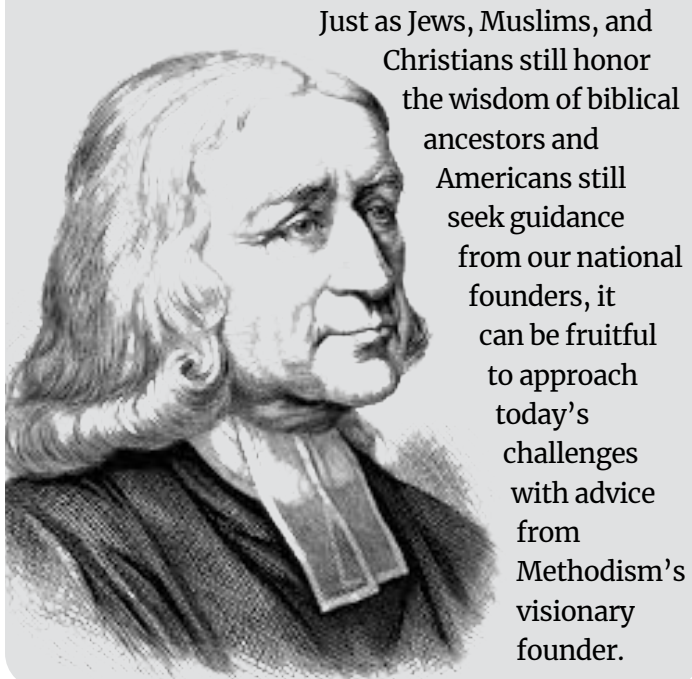


What would Wesley say to us today?

By Glenn Wagner

It may be a stretch for any of us to pretend to know what a person who died 229 years ago on March 2, 1791, would have to say on contemporary issues of consequence or even believe that Wesley's posthumous wisdom would be heeded. But I think we can deduce Wesley's thoughts based on his writings, which include 400 volumes of sermons, notes, commentary, and correspondence. Many of the books written by John Wesley are still available in print. There are also many informative books about Wesley by authors interested in his life.

Under John Wesley's leadership, Methodism grew from a small group of devoted believers into a global movement for Christ. The clear imprint of John Wesley's spiritual ideas and personal devotion to the gospel of Jesus is still discernable in the organization, people, and spirit of the Church.



Question:

What would the founder of the world Methodist movement, that touches the lives of 80 million people globally and over 12 million people in the United States, say if he could be called upon to offer his advice today to United Methodists during a deadly pandemic?

Wesley response:

John Wesley was no stranger to upsetting circumstances. Wesley remembered the fire in February of 1709 when, at the age of five, he was rescued from the burning parsonage of the St. Andrews Anglican Church in Epworth, England. His father Samuel served as rector there for 40 years. John was saved in a dramatic rescue from the flaming upper floor. It happened after previous failed attempts to rescue him prompted an emergency family prayer for his survival and, brave onlookers made an impromptu human ladder by balancing on each other's shoulders to reach John just in time. His parents reminded John that he was "a brand plucked from the burning." Wesley learned under challenging circumstances to look for the presence of God amid each trial.

Plagues that caused massive loss of life were also a remembered part of life in England at the time of Wesley. In response to recurrent epidemics of bubonic plague, authorities in London instituted the tradition of publishing a Bill of Mortality each week. The "Great Plague of London," which hit the city in the summer of 1665, is estimated to have killed between 75,000 and 100,000 Londoners (out of a total population of about 460,000). This Bill of Mortality was still being published in 1723 while

John Wesley was a student at Oxford and he noted in a letter home that an outbreak of smallpox took the life of one of his university classmates.[1]

Because of his conviction that healthy living is assisted by responsible life choices made in gratitude to God, John Wesley studied and shared the latest information about ways persons can work to maintain good personal health. His book, "Primitive Physic," promoted healthy habits. I believe Wesley would concur with medical doctors who advise safe practices for the sake of all during this pandemic. Wesley's three simple rules, which include, Do all the good you can, Love God, and Do no harm are still sound guides for personal and congregational practice.

John Wesley is also remembered for his willingness to adapt his leadership for the sake of the gospel in a period of great change.

As Methodists in America encountered the challenges of living faithfully on the frontier, John Wesley first encouraged loyalty to the Church of England.

When the colonies experienced rising tensions with England, Wesley wrote to his preachers in America on March 1, 1775, advising them to be non-partisan in their preaching. "My Dear Brethren . . . It is your part to be peacemakers, to be loving and tender to all, but to addict yourselves to no party. . . Keep yourselves pure, do all you can to help and soften all; but beware how you adopt another's jar." [2]

On June 15, 1775, John Wesley, responding to troubling news from America about the brewing conflict, wrote an impassioned letter to Lord North, England's first Lord of the Treasury, urging official consideration of American grievances and encouraging a more peaceful approach to resolving conflict.[3]

When Wesley's official attempts to encourage Church of England leaders to ordain and send additional priests to America failed and further complications arose when the American colonists secured independence through revolution, Wesley noted that God must be doing a new thing in America. Wesley then broke with convention and decided on his own to ordain and send new leadership for the fledgling American Methodists to help meet their emerging needs for the sake of the gospel. His original intention for Methodism was not to organize a new denomination but to provide help for persons who wanted to be intentional in their faithfulness. The American Revolution inspired Wesley to take a bold new step for the future of the movement.

On October 3, 1783, Wesley wrote again to the preachers in America asking them to abide by Methodist discipline and to accept the leadership of Francis Asbury as Wesley's General Assistant.[4]

Based on Wesley's own experience dealing with public health issues, unexpected conflict, and changing global circumstances, it is clear from John Wesley's writings that he would counsel the importance of unity. I believe Wesley would promote a non-partisan commitment to the gospel of peace, while at the same time embracing changes that may be needed.

John Wesley would have empathy for the enormous suffering caused by this pandemic but would prayerfully observe with gratitude how the coronavirus is also creating a new opportunity for the church to be in ministry. I believe John Wesley would affirm the way that the internet today is carrying the gospel message to new people. John Wesley would also realize that if a virtual meeting is required to sustain the church safely in troubled times, he would be first among ZOOMs for the sake of Christ's mission.



Question:

What would John Wesley think about a church and nation being tested by profound division?

Wesley Response:

John Wesley would remind United Methodists of the central importance of our personal decision to "live with a single eye." Wesley began this practice during his days at Oxford University when he, with a small group of like-minded Christian believers, sought to order his life after the example of Jesus so that every aspect of his living was focused on giving glory and honor to God. Living with this single eye was John Wesley's highest priority. This emphasis for all of his personal and ministry decisions was the reason he and his friends were ridiculed on Oxford's campus and sarcastically referred to as "Methodists." Wesley advocated throughout his life for the benefits of living with intentional method and loving God in all things. He believed that a person who lived without faith was like "an unbridled horse without course in a field wandering around expending much energy but to no apparent purpose." [5]

In seminary, I was privileged to read pamphlets written and published by John Wesley that were available at the university library on this subject of living with a single eye. John Wesley's pamphlets covered topics of speech, dress, finances, use of time, and social action on issues of public consequence. Wesley challenged his readers to consider all the practical ways we may each order life so that every aspect of our living is done in gratitude to God for the gift of life. I learned from Wesley that we live life differently when we live it each day with eternity in mind.

In a letter to John Morgan on January 15, 1734, Wesley wrote, ". . . let us agree what religion is. I take religion to be, not the bare saying over so many prayers, morning and evening, in public or in private; not anything superadded now and then to a careless or worldly life; but a constant ruling habit of soul, a renewal of our minds in the image of God, a recovery of the divine likeness, a still-increasing conformity of heart and life to the pattern of our most holy Redeemer." [6]

Again stressing the importance of holy focus, Wesley wrote a letter to his traveling preachers on August 4, 1769, in which speculated about how Methodist unity might be preserved when he would someday be gone. "I take it for granted it cannot be preserved by any means between those who have not a single eye. Those who aim at anything but the glory of God and the salvation of men, who desire or seek any earthly thing, whether honor, profit, or ease, will not, cannot continue in the Connexion." [7]

.....
Question:

What would John Wesley think about ministry with the poor in a time of great need and disruption to giving?

Wesley Response:

In regards to stewardship, John Wesley led the church by his sacrificial example. It is said that he determined how much money he needed to live and committed to giving the rest of his wealth for the service of the gospel. His rule for stewardship was "earn all you can, save all you can, and give all you can for the glory of God." [8]

Wesley's will stated the last four British pounds in his name were to be gifted in gratitude to his pallbearers, so when his body was lowered in the grave, he would die with no assets and no debts. We can guess that Wesley would diagnose our current stewardship issues by keeping our focus not on our debts but the urgent mission of Christ, the transformative power of the gospel, and the immediate needs of the poor. He would lead by his sacrificial example.

.....
Question:

How would John Wesley counsel regarding acts of police violence against persons of color and the heightened awareness of systemic racism?

Wesley Response:

John Wesley was a champion of social justice. He was an advocate in his day for better working conditions and in support of education for children. His last letter was written less than a week before his death to William Wilberforce, a young abolitionist leader in the movement to bring an end to slavery. Wesley offered his heartfelt praise and encouragement to this young leader:

"Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils. But if God be for you, who can be against you? Are all of them together stronger than God? O be not weary of well-doing! Go on, in the name of God and in the power of His might, till even American slavery (the vilest that ever saw the sun) shall vanish away before it." [9]

Wesley did not shy away from directly addressing social injustice. He encouraged Methodists to model this social witness in their groups and in their personal lives.

Early Methodist class meetings, small groups of eight to 12 believers, met weekly for prayer, Bible study, and doing good works after the pattern of the Oxford Holy Club. It was their practice to spend time during each meeting asking each other, "How is it with your soul?" Members would then encourage each other to do good works. This weekly evaluation required honesty and love.

In Wesley's correspondence, there are many examples where he offered an assessment of the observed actions of others. In his final letter to Francis Asbury in America dated September 20, 1788, John Wesley chided his friend, "In one point, my dear brother, I am a little afraid both the Doctor (Thomas Coke) and you differ from me. I study to be little: you study to be great. I creep: you strut along. I found a school: you a college! nay and call it after your own names! O beware, do not seek to be something! Let me be nothing, and 'Christ be all in all!'" [10] In the same letter Wesley critiqued his friend for taking the title of Bishop and added, "They shall never by my consent call me Bishop!" Asbury later noted in his diary that this was a bitter pill from one of his dearest friends.

From Wesley's point of view, the significant problems of the world demand our attention. He also believed we must never lose sight of the need to do the hard work of addressing our short-comings and maturing our own personal witness for Christ. It is clear from Wesley's correspondence that sacrificial service and personal humility are to be valued. Positively impacting issues like systemic racism and economic disparity may be long and difficult struggles. We can begin with being more open to others and generous with our resources for the sake of the gospel. Wesley is remembered for his bold outward-facing vision, "The world is my parish." He also taught his followers to recognize the importance of caring for their own inward and personal witness.

.....
Question:

What would John Wesley suggest to church leaders challenged to run worship services without gathering together and without congregational singing?

Wesley Response:

A great challenge for John Wesley during this pandemic would be how to lead worship while understanding how the singing by infected persons is known to spread the coronavirus. Singing hymns of praise to God was an important way that John Wesley helped teach lessons of faith to early Methodists. He and his brother Charles used personal pronouns in their hymn lyrics to personalize the gospel message. Enthusiastic group singing of hymns helped people to remember and apply faith to life. John Wesley knew that singing is a great tool for learning.



In his rules for singing, Wesley concluded with “Above all sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing him more than yourself, or any other creature. Attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually; so shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve of here, and reward when he cometh in the clouds of heaven.” [11]



Given the current dangers of singing together in worship, I believe that Wesley would adapt worship to encourage believers to sing along at a distance, consider the words while the music is played instrumentally, or sing while separated outdoors. Wesley would support mask-wearing to inhibit the spread of the virus in public spaces. Wesley would seek to keep the blessing of singing to strengthen our faith while standing firm against the harm that unmasked congregational singing in enclosed spaces can cause during this pandemic. I believe John Wesley would urge Methodists to wait to resume pre-pandemic congregational singing indoors until a proven vaccine can make singing safe again for all.

Question:

What parting advice would John Wesley offer to United Methodists in need of encouragement?

Wesley Response:

Prayer is an essential part of Wesley’s “method” for giving glory and honor to God in all things. Wesley’s covenant prayer still offers comfort and direction for believers.

“I am no longer my own, but thine.
 Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.
 Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
 Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,
 exalted for thee or brought low for thee.
 Let me be full, let me be empty.
 Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
 I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.
 And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.
 And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.”

NOTES:

[1] Gill, Frederick, editor, Selected Letters of John Wesley, Philosophical Library, New York 1956 pg. 2
 [2] Gill, Frederick, editor, Selected Letters of John Wesley, Philosophical Library, New York 1956 pg. 165
 [3] Gill, Frederick, editor, Selected Letters of John Wesley, Philosophical Library, New York 1956 pg. 166-167
 [4] Gill, Frederick, editor, Selected Letters of John Wesley, Philosophical Library, New York 1956 pg. 197-198
 [5] John Wesley, Causes of the Inefficiency of Christianity in The Works of the Rev. John Wesley VII London: John Mason, 1829, pp. 285-286
 [6] Gill, Frederick, editor, Selected Letters of John Wesley, Philosophical Library, New York 1956 pg. 27

[7] Gill, Frederick, editor, Selected Letters of John Wesley, Philosophical Library, New York 1956 pg. 145
 [8] John Wesley, Causes of the Inefficiency of Christianity in The Works of the Rev. John Wesley VII London: John Mason, 1829, pp. 285-286
 [9] Gill, Frederick, editor, Selected Letters of John Wesley, Philosophical Library, New York 1956 pg. 237
 [10] Gill, Frederick, editor, Selected Letters of John Wesley, Philosophical Library, New York 1956 pg. 221
 [11] John Wesley, “Directions for Singing,” quoted in A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists ed. Franz Hildebrandt, Oliver A. Beckerlegge and Frank Baker, vol. 7, The Works of John Wesley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 765.



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The Catholic Spirit

A paraphrased sermon by John Wesley

While we all will agree that God asks us to love all people, including our enemies, we must also ask how many of us actually practice that principle.

In truth, we find it hard even to love all members of the Christian community because of differences of opinions and modes of worship.

These differences may make it difficult for us to form an organic union, but they do not prohibit a union of affection. Though we may not all think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart even if we are not of one opinion?

In the Old Testament reading, you will note that Jehu does not ask Jehonadab about his opinions in spite of the fact that he probably held some unusual ones.

Jehonadab, as all people, held strong opinions and he regarded his opinions as absolute truth. Indeed, Jeremiah tells us (Jeremiah 35:3-20) that because of Jehonadab's teachings about abstinence from wine, neither he nor his children, nor his children's children would ever drink a glass of wine.

But Jehu does not concern himself with this or any other of Jehonadab's opinions.

It's possible that even today some people may hold opinions as strongly as did Jehonadab. And experience tells us that differences in opinion on religious matters are equally common. This condition existed in the past and will exist to the end of time because we all have limited knowledge.

While we may hold strong opinions, as thinking people we also know that some of our opinions about religion are wrong, but we may not know which opinions those might be.

Don't ask others to share your opinions

If you are a wise person, therefore, you will allow others the same liberty of thinking which you want for yourself. Because you don't want others to insist that you share their opinions, you will in turn not ask them to hold your opinions.

Returning to the Scripture, we may also note that Jehu also does not ask Jehonadab about his pattern of worship although there were probably major differences between the two. Jehonadab worshipped God at Jerusalem and Jehu did not.

Even today, because of differing opinions, there are many ways of worshipping God.

All Christians may believe that God is a spirit and those that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth," but the particular modes of living out this belief vary greatly.

There is no way to know which worship style is correct. You must follow your own conscience.

Nevertheless, everyone who professes to be a Christian is obliged by the nature of that faith to be a member of a particular congregation.

For many, the choice of congregations is determined by the place and practices of our families. For example, one who is born in England generally becomes a member of the Church of England.

And when he was had departed, he came upon Jehonadab, the son of Rechab, coming to meet him: and he saluted him and said to him, "Is thine heart right as my heart is with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, "It is." "If it be, give me thine hand."

II Kings 10:15



Opinions change

I once vigorously believed that all people should belong to the church in which they were raised, but for many reasons, I no longer hold this view. If this had been a rule, the Reformation would never have taken place.

I dare not, therefore, impose my mode of worship on anyone else. And because of this, I would never ask someone with whom I would unite in love, "Are you a member of my church?" nor would I ask, "Are you a member of my congregation?"

I also won't ask about what form of church government they prefer, nor will I ask what mode of receiving baptism or Communion they prefer.

Is your heart right with God?

I will only ask, "Is your heart devoted to the same things as my heart is?"

By this, I mean first: Is your heart right with God? Do

you believe in His perfections? His wisdom? His justice? His mercy? His truth? Do you believe God governs even the tiniest thing and even the most noxious to His own glory? Do you walk by faith and look to the eternal instead of the temporal?

To ask if the heart is devoted to the same things is to ask if they believe in Jesus Christ as Lord. Do you know him and him crucified? Is he formed in your heart by faith?

I ask if you love God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul and with all your strength.

To ask this question is to ask if you are doing what God wants you to do. Do you view life as a short stay in a strange land until it is time to return to your Father's house? Is your eye always looking toward Jesus?

Is your heart right toward your neighbor? Do you love all humankind without exception? Do you love your enemies? Do you pray for those who abuse and misuse you? Do you show your love by your works? Do you help neighbors, strangers, and friends by assisting them?

Give me your hand

If this is where your heart is, give me your hand. I don't mean that you must share my opinions. I neither expect you to do so, nor do I want you to do so. Keep your opinions as I will keep mine.

I also don't want to argue with you about these opinions. Put them to one side and give me your hand.

I also don't mean to worship as I do. You and I can both worship as we please and we can each believe that our way is most acceptable to God.

I believe the episcopal form of church government is scriptural and is in keeping with the teachings of the apostles. You may think the Presbyterian or independents have a better form of government and you will act accordingly.

I believe infants should be baptized by dipping or sprinkling. You may think otherwise and you should follow your own beliefs.

I think I should drink wine and eat bread as a memorial to my dying master. You may have another opinion and I have no desire to argue with you one minute on this or any other such matter.

Let all these smaller concerns be put to one side. If you love God and all humankind, I ask no more. Give me your hand.

By this, I mean, first, love me, love your enemies, and love all humankind. Love in a way that is long-suffering and kind; that is patient, compassionate, and a love that does not envy others. Love me with a love that ignores my foolish actions and my physical limitations. Love me even if I act in ways that are contrary to the will of God.

Love me in such a way that you will think no evil of me, and you will always be willing to think the best about all my words and actions.

By this I also mean, pray for me. Pray that I might have more faith and express more love. Pray that I will do the will of our Father.

I also ask you to correct me when you think I have done wrong. Speak to me in love about these concerns. Tell me how I can correct my behavior. Love me--not in words only--but in deeds. I will return the same to you.

The catholic spirit

All of this will help us understand what is meant by the catholic spirit. There is hardly any expression that has been more misunderstood or misused. But it is relatively easy to correct any misuse of the words.

First, if you have the catholic spirit, you will not be indifferent to all opinions. This unsettledness of thought and thus being "driven to and fro and tossed about with every wind of doctrine" is a curse, not catholicism.

If you are a person of catholic spirit, you are fixed as the sun in your judgment of the main branches of Christian doctrine. Certainly, you are willing to hear arguments against your principles, but you do not waver in your own mind. You don't try to blend two opinions into one.

Just because you have a muddy understanding of the faith does not make you a person with a catholic spirit. In such a case you are nearer the anti-Christ than you are to Christ.

If you have a catholic spirit, you will not be indifferent to public worship. You will have no scruples at all about where and how you worship. You will be convinced that the manner in which you worship is based on reason and Scripture.

And if you have the catholic spirit you will not be indifferent about the congregation in which you worship. In that body, you will receive Communion; you will pour out your soul in prayer; and you will join in praise and thanksgiving. Within this group, you will seek God by fasting, you will watch over others as they watch over you. You will correct others when they stray, you will comfort when they mourn, and you will encourage when they are troubled. They will do the same for you.

But, while you are sure of your beliefs and your worship patterns, and while you united to a single congregation, if you have a catholic spirit, you will love and embrace all neighbors, friends, strangers, and enemies.

A catholic spirit is a universal love.

Wesley preached this sermon twice: at Newcastle on Sept. 8, 1749 and at Bristol on November 3, 1749.

**Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.**

—John Wesley



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2020 has been a year of great challenges and changes. In the midst of this upheaval, one thing has remained constant: *Missio Dei*, God's mission. Our work continues as well for abundant health for all, disaster response and recovery, the work of missionaries around the world, and evangelism and church revitalization.

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Lessons from Wesley for all churches

By Dr. Lovett H. Weems, Jr.

Martin E. Marty once observed that between the time of Luther and Calvin and our own time, John Wesley symbolized the genius of adaptation to modernity. In his foreword to E. Brooks Holifield's *Health and Medicine in the Methodist Tradition* (1986), Marty reminds us that the Wesleyan movement was so successful that for one or two centuries it was one of the strongest movements in Western Christendom. Marty's discussion of the reasons for Wesley's pioneering genius suggests important lessons for churches today.



Embrace knowledge.

Wesley was not afraid of modernity. He was no enemy of science, and he was a friend of medicine. Some of his medical theories seem bizarre today; yet they were not far off the mark of the best scientific efforts of his time. They also showed a passionate regard for humans in their suffering and a clear sense that his workers were to care and cure not only in the realm of the spiritual.

Emphasize social relations.

Wesley knew the importance of social relations in the search for well-being. He provided classes and patterns of discipline. This practice led one scholar to argue that most of what is worthwhile in contemporary group therapy is consistent with, and in some ways flows from, Wesley's understanding that people need the support of other people, and also that they like to provide such support.



Dr. Lovett H. Weems Jr. is senior consultant at the Lewis Center for Church Leadership, distinguished professor of church leadership emeritus at Wesley Theological Seminary, and author of several books on leadership.

Journey toward wholeness.

Wesley's doctrine of holiness and sanctification involved a journey toward wholeness. He did not talk about a "state" of health or a "condition" of well-being. Instead, we are pilgrims, restless ones, seekers.

Respect the values of pluralism.

Marty understands that contemporary bearers of the Wesleyan tradition both encourage and fear pluralism. Wesley made a deliberate decision to promote the development of freedom so as to assure that Methodism did not become narrow, confining, and easily defined.

Improve people's lives to change the world.

Wesley believed that churches and church people had to promote well-being wherever they were. He understood that religions of the West tended to be part of the status quo. Wesley was far from a revolutionary, but it is true that wherever the Wesleyans went, people were helped and the conditions of their lives became better. In this sense, the movement was a "positive virus" that changed the world.



As the humanitarian relief and development arm of The United Methodist Church, the United Methodist Committee on Relief assists United Methodists and churches to become involved globally in direct ministry to persons in need.



UMCmission.org/UMCOR

A message to a slave trader

By John Wesley

Are you a man? Then you should have a human heart. But have you indeed? What is your heart made of?

Is there no such principle as compassion there?

Do you never feel another's pain?

Have you no sympathy? No sense of human woe? No pity for the miserable?

When you saw the flowing eyes, the heaving breasts, the bleeding sides and tortured limbs of your fellow-creatures, were you a stone, or a brute? Did you look upon them with the eyes of a tiger?

When you squeezed the agonizing creatures down in the ship, or when you threw their poor mangled remains into the sea, had you no relenting?

Did not one tear drop from your eye, one sigh escape from your breast? Do you feel no relenting now?

If you do not, you must go on, till the measure of your iniquities is full. Then will God deal with you, as you have dealt with them, and require all their blood at your hands. At that day it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for you!

What wonder, if they should cut your throat? And if they did, whom could you thank for it, but yourself? You first acted the villain by making them slaves (whether you stole them or bought them).

But if your heart does relent, though in a small degree, know it is a call from the God of love.

If you hear his voice, harden not your heart.

Today resolve, God will be your helper, to escape for your life.

Take no regard of money. All that a man has will he give for his life? Whatever you lose, lose not your soul: nothing can countervail that loss. Immediately quit the horrid trade: At all events, be an honest man.

Have no more any part in this detestable business. Instantly leave it to those unfeeling wretches who laugh at human nature and compassion. Be a man, not a wolf, a devourer of the human species.

Be merciful, that you may obtain mercy.

*Adapted from portions of **Thoughts upon Slavery**, a 1774 pamphlet by John Wesley*



How to love your enemies

By John Wesley

Though we may not be able to be friends, our enemies are also beloved creatures of God. When we love our enemies, rather than hate them, we see them and behave toward them as God does. They may remain our enemies and may never be our friends. But they are loved as Christ loves us and gave himself for us, friend and enemy alike.

Love your enemies.

See that you bear a tender good-will to those who are most bitter of spirit against you; who wish you all manner of evil.

Bless them that curse you.

Are there any whose bitterness of spirit breaks forth in bitter words? Who are continually cursing and reproaching you when you are present, and "saying all evil against you" when absent? So much the rather do you bless: In conversing with them use all mildness and softness of language. Reprove them, by repeating a better lesson before them; by showing them how they ought to have spoken. And, in speaking of them, say all the good you can, without violating the rules of truth and justice.

Do good to them that hate you.

Let your actions show that you are as real in love as they in hatred. Return good for evil. 'Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.'

If you can do nothing more, at least 'pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.' You can never be disabled from doing this; nor can all their malice or violence hinder you.

From Sermon 23



The saving grace of the Wesleyan class meeting

By Gil Hanke

I challenge you to do something old in a new way.

However, I warn you, if you follow the Wesleyan path I describe, you will never be the same.

My adventure with this life-changing experience began in the fall of 2014 when I attended a Council of Bishops meeting in Oklahoma City. At that meeting I got to meet and learn from Dr. Kevin Watson, who introduced the bishops to his book, *The Class Meeting, Reclaiming a Forgotten and Essential Small Group Experience*.

I read most of the book before I returned home.



While we completed the study in early 2015, all but one of the men continue to meet every week in 2021. Only one man had to leave the group when he changed jobs and had a different time schedule.

We meet every week as a class meeting. We don't study the Bible or discuss other subjects; we do what Wesley asked his congregants to do—talk about our experiences with God.

During these six years, “life” has happened to each of us, just as your life has had ups and downs since 2015. We always meet the same day and time, and for one hour.

It is one of the most valuable hours of my week.

Four groups leading to 32 groups with 256 participants

In the midst of the pandemic of 2020, when many things shut down, I got a crazy idea—“Let's start four additional class meeting with a stipulation that after the initial 8-week study, each participant must promise to start his own class meeting in his context.” I immediately started two and Dr. Rick Vance started one. In October, I started a fourth.

I enjoy the teaching, but most of all, I enjoy the outcome.

Since group members lived in different states, our 8-week study of the principles of class meetings was 100 percent on line.

Our first group

In mid-December of that year, I had assembled a group of six men who did not know one another—three laymen and three clergy. I purposely made this a group of strangers who would probably disagree and who would see any subject from six different angles. If this group could get through this book and beyond, it would work with any group.



Gil Hanke is the top staff executive of the General Commission on UM Men.



Put simply, these groups focus on questions about the previous seven days and plans for the next seven days. “Where have you seen Christ?” “How is it with your soul?” “When did you feel called to act and how did that work out?” and “How will you be different next week?”

Difference between knowing and doing

These meetings center on ways to put discipleship into action. It is not about knowing more; it is about doing more. As Wesley stated:

“Do all the good you can, By all the means you can, In all the ways you can, In all the places you can, At all the times you can, To all the people you can, As long as ever you can.”

We need to be active members of the Kingdom of God. Yes, there is a place for curriculum-based small groups. It is good when a group helps us know more, but it is better when a vital group emboldens us to do more.

Yes, class members answer similar questions each week, but answering these questions cause us to engage in Christian actions daily

These class meetings are the most transformational groups I have ever led or experienced.

Start your own class meeting

If you need some coaching to help start a group in your context, which could be in your church, your community, your district, or with seven or eight guys in different locations and different time zones, let me know.

The class meeting is what made the “Methodist movement” a movement.

I pray we can be that dynamic movement again, using modern technology, so that all have an on-growing relationships with Jesus Christ.

42 years of care for an island community

By Dennis Carroll

The National Seashore of Cape Hatteras, N.C. is a go-to vacation area. Its fishing, historic lighthouse, and sandy beaches, are attractions for tourists seeking sun and surf.

The chain of barrier islands also are easy targets for hurricanes.

Cape Hatteras UM Men is in its 42nd year of helping islanders. Eighty men, women and young people from several denominations all work together to help year-round residents cope with routine problems and recover from natural disasters.

The ministry began in 1978 when Walt Fulcher, a retired U.S. Army officer, invited several UM men to help islanders recover from damaging storms and to provide a safety net for widows of fishermen.

They raised funds for their Emergency Assistance Program through fish fries and barbecue fund-raisers.



WALT FULCHER AND JACK GRAY PAUSE IN THEIR WORK AT THE FOOD PANTRY.



Dennis Carroll, a retired mechanical engineer, is director of Cape Hatteras UM Men. He has lived on Hatteras Island for 19 years and he has been affiliated with the UM Men ministry since 2005.

After the single bridge to the island was damaged in a storm in 1992, the ministry established a food pantry to reduce future risk. Working with families screened and referred by the Dare County Department of Social Services, the pantry has provided thousands of meals to hungry people.

In 2000, Ray and Claire Schaaf began their 20-year stint as administrators of the pantry. Their compassion and generosity are heartwarming, and important to island residents.



RAY AND CLAIRE SCHAAF SORT DONATED FOOD. THE COUPLE ALSO PROVIDE A SHOULDER TO CRY ON.

Under Walt's leadership the ministry grew in its abilities and reputation and after 37 years of service, he retired in 2015.

I became the second director of Cape Hatteras UM Men.

COVID-19

We received a grant from the Outer Banks Community Foundation to help those affected by COVID-19. Since we've operated a food pantry for 28 years and our Emergency Assistance Program for 42 years, it was logical for our group to respond to the need. In addition to food, we also assist with shelter, utilities, and other emergencies.

Recently, a COVID survivor called to say, "Methodist Men saved my life when you gave me air conditioning. The cool air was my only relief."

Disaster Response

Since Hatteras Island is a frequent target for major storms, we have a lot of disaster-response experience.

Our most recent major storm was Hurricane Dorian in September, 2019.

We currently have 55 members trained by the UM Committee on Relief (UMCOR) with plenty of on-the-job experience. Sometimes these trained members have become victims themselves and their families have been evacuated from their homes.

Trained leaders and volunteers form skilled teams supplemented by other volunteers who want to help but simply need a defined job and a leader with supplies and equipment.



VOLUNTEERS REPLACE THE FLOOR OF A HURRICANE-DAMAGED HOME ON HATTERAS ISLAND.

Requests for assistance

Following Hurricane Dorian, 466 families requested and received immediate help from UM Men, supplemented by other disaster response groups. The outside help was for short-term disaster response only. However, UM Men followed up with the long-term recovery help for 35 of the families who had no other assistance options. We were able to make both major and minor repairs which enabled most of the families to return to their homes. A few were assisted with alternative housing.

Although we work primarily on Hatteras Island, we do respond to calls for help from neighboring areas. Recently one of our teams responded to an urgent call from Windsor, N.C., following a deadly tornado spawned by Hurricane Isaias. In one day, the team repaired the roofs of 11 houses and helped clear access to other homes.



Volunteers repair damaged roof following hurricane.

Professional assistance

The pandemic has reduced our ability to turn out volunteers, but we are blessed with the ability to hire skilled help when necessary.

For example, emergency roof repair is difficult, slow, and unsafe for most of our senior volunteers. As a result, we've formed a partnership with a capable roofing crew who give us first priority and excellent pricing, and they are willing to travel with us. Also, on occasion we've hired skilled carpenters, plumbers, electricians, and HVAC techs to supplement the work of volunteers.

Repetitive loss reduction

We are reducing the impact of repetitive storm flooding by raising trailers for families who have limited financial resources. We chose trailers since there are no government programs for raising manufactured homes. With our partners we've developed an economical system to elevate 12 trailers. The UM Committee on Relief provided a professional case worker to screen the applicants and the Outer Banks Community Foundation provided funds for the work.



VOLUNTEERS REPLACE DECK ON TRAILER RAISED BY UM MEN FOLLOWING HURRICANE.

The gratitude of the families has been heartwarming.

Emergency assistance

Cape Hatteras UM Men has an ongoing role as an emergency backstop for those with no other options. We repair roofs, hot water heaters, and HVAC equipment, and we build wheelchair ramps. We also help families move into temporary housing while their homes are being repaired and have helped three displaced families qualify for mortgages.

In addition, we make one-time emergency payments for rent and utilities, and we recently paid a discounted fee to an eye surgeon to save the eyesight of a teenager with no means to pay.

Partnerships

We partnered with the Cape Hatteras Electric Foundation, Interfaith Community Outreach, the United Way, the Knights of Columbus, Our Lady of the Seas Catholic Parish, and the UMCOR to help uninsured families with home repairs following Hurricane Matthew and Hurricane Dorian.

In a normal year, our budget for emergency assistance totals between \$70,000 and \$90,000. With the assistance of these agencies and organizations, the ministry provided thousands of volunteer hours and more than \$500,000 in assistance following these two devastating storms.

Our partnership with Dare Country Social Services provides screening for emergency-assistance cases. With reliable determinations of need, we can respond quickly (often within hours) to requests for help.

We also receive requests for help from local ministers.

Outreach to young people

Our UM Men organization is a sponsor of Young Life Hatteras, part of the international Young Life organization. One of our board members is a leader for this group, which works wonders with young people, especially at-risk kids. This is our way of trying to be proactive, not just reactive, in the lives of young people. Young Life young people also do some of the heavy lifting when senior volunteers need assistance. We hope to begin some mentoring between our seniors and the young people in the near future.

We also sponsor a grief-support group.

Although we don't actively participate in substance-abuse cases, we have donated to a local charity with a history of successful rehabilitation.

SEVEN TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL MINISTRY TO A COMMUNITY

1.

Promise that 100 percent of the funds will go to the needy. Our members support a small administrative account for operating expenses, such as utilities for our food pantry, maintenance, mailing expense, and transportation. If a food pantry freezer needs replacing, as just happened, our members pay for it. We're all volunteers who "pay to work."

2.

Welcome diversity. While we're officially a UM Men organization, over the years, the ministry has become a community-wide organization. Members include Catholics, Baptists, and other denominations. While we are a men's organization, we have a number of women, including two women pastors, who contribute to early-response, rebuild, and food-pantry work.

3.

Tell good stories and make it easy to donate. Our ministry operates entirely on the good will of the public and our loyal supporters. People like good stories, so we share them through several media outlets and word of mouth. Keep your supporters informed and make it easy to donate electronically. Young people don't write checks.

4.

Operate a food pantry. Our food pantry is a source of pride in the community. Schools, sports teams, civic groups, stores, and businesses want to participate, and donations pour in for the pantry and our emergency-assistance program. If your community already has a food pantry, perhaps you could join forces to expand its outreach.

5.

Apply for grants. We've been successful in seeking grants for disaster response, and for special projects and programs. Recruit a capable volunteer for grant research and applications.

6.

Develop a loyal support group. Your UM Men organization may not have our advantage of thousands of visitors and non-resident homeowners as supporters, but you still need loyal supporters. Cultivating such support takes time and personal contact. Loyal supporters also step up when a need arises.

7.

Develop a structure that provides leadership and accountability. Establish a governing board to steer the organization and add balance to decision making. Recruit a coordinator of volunteers to ensure adequate staffing for projects. Create a reserve account for emergencies. Prepare written guidelines including financial processes. Work with the UM Committee on Relief to provide emergency-response training.

Disputes can be settled without violence and hatred

By the Rev. Walter Albritton

The media remind us daily of the abhorrent political divisiveness that exists in America. The division is so ugly that one wonders if “a more perfect Union” can be achieved in our lifetime, though the hope for it does persist in the minds of many peace-loving citizens.

A lesson from the 18th century

Political dissension, however, is not a new phenomenon in America. Historians remind us that our first president, George Washington, was so “bruised and disillusioned” by his critics that he said to a friend during his second term in office, “No man was ever more tired of public life, or more devoutly wished for retirement, than I do.”

Washington spent an inordinate amount of time “refereeing” the fierce and continuing quarrels between two of his cabinet members, Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson. Each man was the primary spokesperson for the two major political divisions of that era and constantly vilified each other.

The good news is that America slowly became a great nation despite the schism that threatened to throttle the birth of a new nation. Somehow, men and women of goodwill found a way to let unity prevail. Perhaps this can inspire hope that men and women of our day can resolve their differences and work together in the pursuit of “a more perfect Union.”

A lesson from the first century

An inspiring story in the 15th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles provides an example of how disputes may be settled amiably for the common good.

There arose in the church in Antioch a dispute about circumcision. As more and more Gentiles began embracing Christ as Lord, some of the Jewish converts insisted that Gentiles could not be saved unless they were circumcised. This resulted in a sharp dispute in the Antioch church so they sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to seek a solution from the apostles and elders.

In Jerusalem the matter was hotly debated. After much discussion, Peter got up and pled with the

group to agree that circumcision was a “yoke” no longer necessary because God had purified the hearts of the Gentiles by faith. “We believe,” Peter insisted, “it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”

At this point Barnabas and Paul shared with the group “the miraculous signs and wonders God has done among the Gentiles through them.” A great silence came over the group as Barnabas and Paul spoke. Then James stood and urged the group to “not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God” by insisting that they be circumcised. So persuasive was James that his judgment inspired concurrence.

Embracing accord, the apostles and elders drafted a letter stating their opinion and sent two disciples to deliver the epistle in person to the Antioch congregation. The letter was received with great joy and the two disciples who read it “said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers.” Unity was preserved and the door to salvation was now more widely opened to Gentiles.

One may observe that in settling this serious dispute, neither side found it necessary to vilify the other. When goodwill is valued, people can share differences of opinion without denigrating those who disagree. In the centuries since Peter and Paul,

the church has grown when Christians resolved their differences and worked together. On the other hand, disputing and despicable criticism of others have always stifled growth and unity.

Mercy and forgiveness

Because we are all flawed, tranquility cannot be realized without the practice of forgiveness. In Romans Paul admonishes us, “If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.” To live peaceably with others we must be willing to extend mercy to people with whom we disagree. Disputes are seldom settled until mercy is extended. This becomes all the more important when we recall that Jesus reminded us that we cannot receive God’s mercy unless we are willing to extend mercy to others.

There is a lesson here for us and our fellow American citizens. We can sow the seeds of dissension and remain divided, fomenting a culture of hatred and violence, or we can find ways to reconcile our differences and, with goodwill, mercy and kindness, work together to achieve “a more perfect Union.”

The future of our nation depends upon the choice made by “we, the people.”



The Rev. Walter Albritton is pastor emeritus of St. James UMC in Montgomery, Alabama.

Commission holds first on-line meeting

All previous meetings of the General Commission on UM Men had a Nashville dateline as meetings were held in their national office on Music Row.

For the first time, the 2020 meeting had no dateline.

Nearly all 28 participants in the September 26 meeting remained in their homes across 16 time zones from the U.S. to the Philippines. All documents were posted on-line and some staff reports were on-line videos.

Bishop James Swanson, president of the commission, chaired the two and one-half -hour virtual event.

Special session

Board members agreed to hold a special session prior to Aug. 29-Sept.7, 2201 postponed General Conference.

This meeting would include current members, at-large members proposed by the Nominating Committee and bishops nominated by the Council of Bishops. At that time, current members could elect nominated people and review legislation to come before General Conference.

Financial plans

The board received audited reports on previous fiscal years and reported that the agency finished 2020 in the black, partially because of \$20,000 raised on the October 2020 Give Day.

Hanke describes the funding for the agency as “complex, and unpredictable.”

The commission also established an operating budget for 2021. That spending plan assumes a decline in giving to the World Service Fund. Current estimates indicate the fund will only collect between 50 to 60 percent of its budgeted amount. While the commission only receives a tiny fraction of that fund, it still represents 25 percent of the income to the agency.

Steve Nailor, president of the UM Foundation, reports the foundation currently has assets totaling \$2.4 million. The 39-year-old foundation annually provides \$41,000 to the Center for Men’s Ministry and \$114,500 to the Center for Scouting Ministries. Nailor is currently working with Scout leaders and conference prayer advocates to ensure the foundation will continue to support these ministries.

Amanda Vogt, chair of the Finance Committee, suggested the board consider sponsoring a virtual 5K fund-raising run.



Men’s Ministry Committee

The Rev. Ben Trammell, chair of the Men’s Ministry Committee, reported on the activities of the Center for Men’s Ministry.

There has been an “exponential increase” in requests for resources during the pandemic, said Dr. Rick Vance, director of the Nashville-based center. “This year, we published three new resources,” said Vance. “The first, *Mission Stories from a Reluctant Volunteer* by Gil Hanke, is given to those who provide financial support for the commission. The second, *Thirty Stops on the Journey*, is a 30-day devotional sent to all charter subscribed churches. The third resource is a virtual publication entitled *United Methodist Men Pray for Peace with Justice*; it is available for anyone to download.”

The commission continues to provide *Amending Through Faith*, an eight-week study series for men who are passionate about ending violence against women.

The commission has also posted a number of [videos of webinars](#) addressing different topics and videos of five national days of prayer are available [here](#).

Scouting Ministry Committee

Phil Howard, chair of the Scouting Ministries Committee, reported on the reported on scouting activities.

The 15-member group agreed to encourage parents and other supporters of scouting to contribute to the foundation, which recently agreed to extend its support through 2024.

The committee also reviewed action taken following the announcement of the bankruptcy of Boy Scout of America. Steven Scheid, director of the center, reports that 53 percent of the staff of the national office, no longer work in the Irving, Texas, office. The bankruptcy does not affect local Scout Councils or churches with Scout units.

Jason Nowland, top staff executive of Programs of Religious Activities with Youth (PRAY), told the committee that there was a 31 percent decline in the number of young people receiving PRAY awards in 2020. Scheid noted that the UMC only experienced a 5 percent loss in PRAY awards.

IN OTHER BUSINESS, THE COMMISSION:

- Received a report on men’s ministry in the Philippines from Carlos Manio.
- Learned there are now 39 certified men’s ministry specialists who help churches in their areas find additional ways to minister to men. An increase in the use of Zoom and other on-line tools open ways for a specialist to serve communities far from his home territory.
- Noted a 4 percent increase in the number of EMS and Legacy members in the first eight months of 2020 compared to the same period in 2019. There are now 2,442 EMS members and legacy builders. There are 3,312 chartered organization, an increase of 146 in the same time period.
- Expressed concern about increased incidences of derogatory language against women as found in national political circles and local levels. “Good guys speak out,” said Vance. “Our silence speaks to what we accept.”
- Learned the commission is preparing a 2021 coordinating calendar that will include national, conference, and district events related to men’s and scouting ministries. The agency is considering the possibility of an on-line summit national meeting in February.
- Learned that 354 people attended a virtual Religious Academy for Scouting
- Received a report from Wade Mays, an executive with the Society of St. Andrew. He said there was 102 percent increase in the number of people who are out of work and the number of hungry families doubled in 2020.
- Heard L.W. Smith, chair of Strength for Service Inc., report that 80 percent of the books of daily devotions are now given to first responders.

Greg Arnold urges churches to reach out to Gen Xers and Millennials

In a video report, Greg Arnold, a Mississippi-based staff member of the commission, said everywhere he has gone in his 10-years of service as a Mississippi-based staff member of the commission, he receives the same question: “How can we reach younger men?”

Greg always asks, “What do you mean by younger men?”

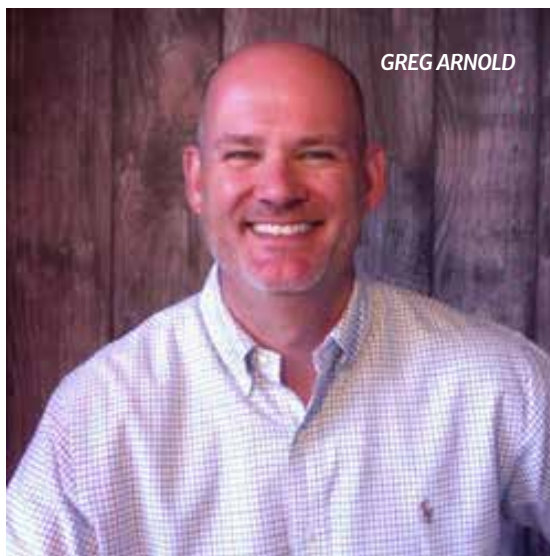
Frequently they want to target Millennials, men 20-35 years of age.

Greg urges commission members not to forget Gen Xers, men between of 35 to 50. “These are men who are grinding at the critical point of their lives. They are going to have the most influence they will ever have.”

Get outside the church

In our efforts to reach this age group, Greg warned commission members not to fall into a trap similar to the one set by Shemaiah when he urged Nehemiah to leave his work on building a wall around Jerusalem. Shemaiah suggested Nehemiah should go into the safety of the temple where he could talk about the progress on the wall building.

Nehemiah refused and said, “Why would I stay in the temple when my work is out on the wall.”



GREG ARNOLD

Two phases of life

“There are two phases in a man’s life,” said Greg. “There is the trophy phase where young men are out getting, gaining, and attaining, and there is the busy phase when a man realizes trophies are not as important as time.”

Greg urged commission members to provide for the needs of both groups. He suggested UM Men organizations should give young men something to go get and then give him confidence by saying, “Well done.”

An app that reaches 32,000 men

Greg has launched a Live Bold, a full-featured app and mobile community designed for Christian men of all ages and stages of faith. At present he has 32,000 participants from 170 countries. The app helps men build stronger faith as they deal with feelings of

guilt, isolation, anxiety, and lack of self-worth.

“We need to help men find ways to forgive themselves so they don’t feel ‘less than’,” said Greg. The app provides opportunities for study, worship, accountability, prayer, and service.

Several UM Men organizations are using an Adventure Men app which provides a four week study, one week of action, and one week of rest.

United Methodist Men- A long history of prayer

In the 1960s, a 3-minute long-distance telephone call cost \$1.70 (about \$12 in today’s money). Evening calls were cheaper, but even then people only made important calls and conversations were brief.

In 1977, the Upper Room Prayer Center established a WATS (Wide Area Telephone Service) line. That phone line enabled people across the U.S. to make toll-free phone calls to the Nashville-based ministry.

UM Men paid for the WATS line and groups of men across the nation received remote calls and spent hours praying with those who called the 24-hour service.

Men received prayer requests from a father concerned about a son struggling with drug addiction, a women caught in a domestic-violence situation, a mother worried about her son stationed overseas, and a brother concerned a sister about to have a serious surgery.

The men provided understanding and prayed with each caller.

With the introduction of cell phones, there was no longer a need for a WATS line, but there was a continuing need for prayer.

In 2018, the prayer line received 264,940 prayer requests. Many were fielded by UM Men.

In 2019, the Upper Room Prayer Center moved from phone requests to on-line prayer requests. While men miss the personal contacts, they do not miss opportunities to respond to people who post prayer requests on the [Upper Room Prayer Wall](#). They pray and post their responses.

During the 2020 pandemic, UM Men found ways to pray together when they couldn’t be together.

Each of the five U.S. jurisdictions sponsored 3-hour prayer sessions where bishops, clergy and laymen offered Scripture readings, meditations and prayers.

During time of racial strife across the U.S., UM Men joined with leaders of men’s ministry organizations in the African American Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church Zion and the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church for a [3-hour prayer session](#).



Men's Ministry leaders from four denominations conduct 3-hour prayer session

"Why should leaders of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church Zion, and the United Methodist Church gather for prayer when everyone is marching on the street?"

That's the question Bishop James Swanson, president of the General Commission on UM Men, asked some 300 participants in a September 27 on-line day of prayer and meditation at which 15 people offered meditations and prayers.

Swanson noted the disciples understood the importance of prayer because they only asked Jesus to teach them how to do one thing. "Teach us how to pray" is the only request of Jesus reported in the Gospels.

The bishop said prayer acknowledges we can't change things on our own and it recognizes our inability to match our deeds with our words as we pray to become one.

"Prayer is the most underutilized weapon in our spiritual arsenal," said the Rev. Dr. Eleazer Merriweather, pastor of a St. Paul's African Methodist Episcopal Church Zion.

"We need prayer like we've never needed it before," said the Rev. Dr. Leone C. Moore, general secretary of Evangelism and Missions for the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. He said moral decay, racism, and division in the U.S. underscore our need for prayer.

The Rev. Ronald Davis, a pastor in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, said the pandemic helped bring us together even while we remain in our homes, "the most essential part of our lives." He encouraged participants to "take back the home" and make it more "Christ-like."

The final participant in the Zoom event was Hank Dozier, former president of the Southeastern Jurisdiction of UM Men. "God is showing us amazing things amid this pandemic and racial tension," he said. "Shalom doesn't mean the absence of conflict; it is the right relationship with God. It is harmony between God and all creation."

Despite the fact there were some 300 people who visited at least some portion of the 3-hour event, and despite the fact that 15 people spoke from 15 different vocations, the only time the internet failed was when it deprived people from hearing the conclusion of Dozier's meditation and prayer.

Make bricks without straw

Christian Methodist Episcopal Church Bishop Teresa Jefferson-Snorton suggested our situation today is similar to one experienced by the Hebrew people when the Pharaoh told them they must make bricks without straw and still produce the same number of bricks in the same amount of time.

Companies are down-sizing and people have lost their jobs, but they are still expecting the same daily output.

Teachers are expected to educate our children without adequate resources.

"We are told to get back to work and school, but without health guidelines or money.

"This is a new slavery," said the bishop.

The bishop said when the Pharaoh issued the order, some of the people responded with "hopeless resignation" and others responded with

"contentious complaining." "That's the exact description of some of our people," she said.

She urged her 300 prayer partners to respond like Moses and Aaron. "Don't give in. Don't give out or complain. Reclaim the unseen and the not-yet.

"We can make a difference even in an unjust society. Don't be discouraged, God will take care of us as we walk and work together."

Sign of unity

In the introductory meditation, the Rev. Scot Moore, director of men's ministry for the African Methodist Episcopal Church Zion, called the 3-hour session an "historic event."

"I strongly believe this is a time the church should not only talk about unity, but it should show unity."

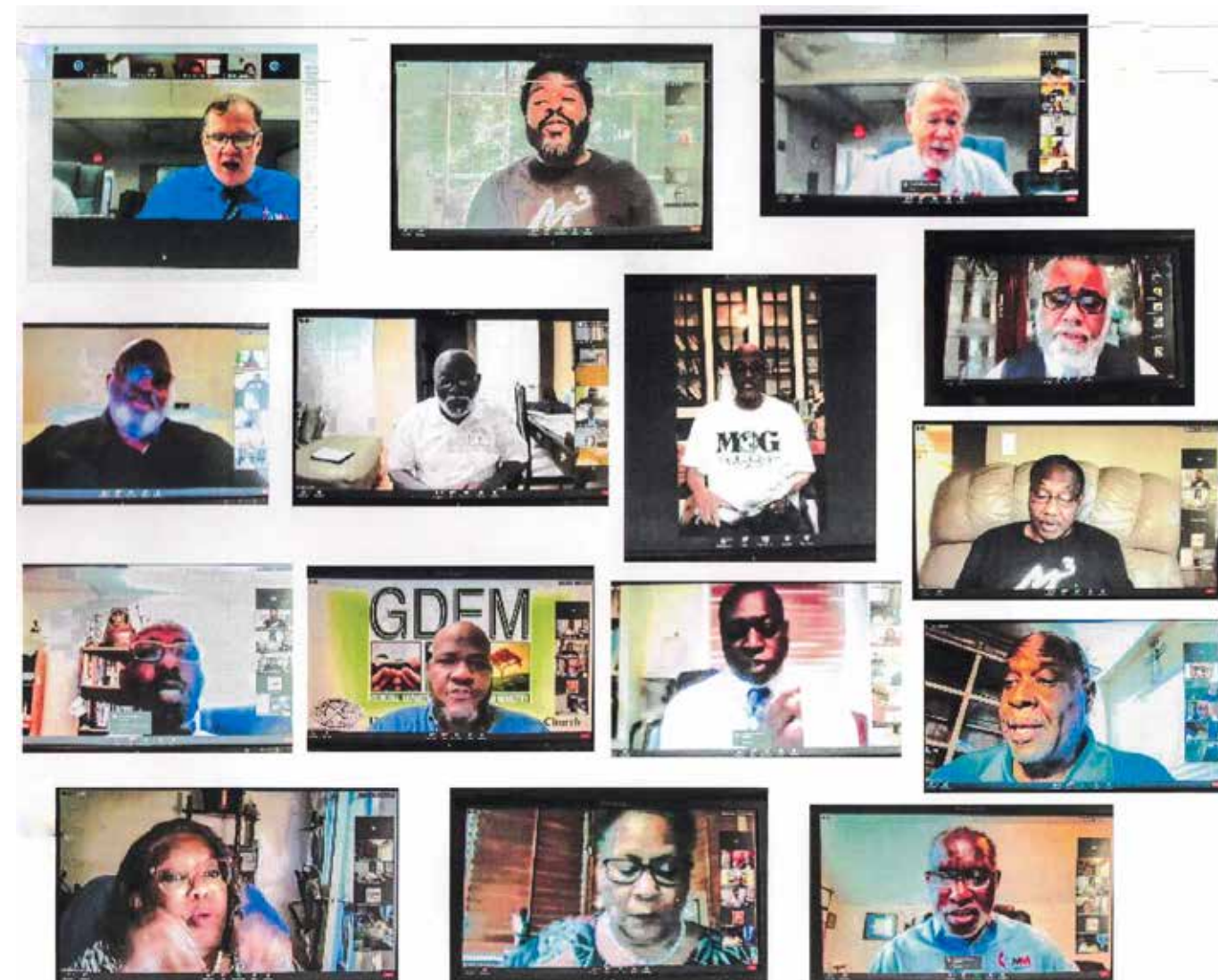
Moore celebrated the diversity by comparing the gathering to a bouquet of flowers; each type of flower

enhances the beauty of the whole bouquet. "Unity is not uniformity," he said.

Dr. Alanzo Smith, a pastor in the African Methodist Episcopal Church Zion, and Gil Hanke, top staff executive of the General Commission on UM Men, lifted up three simple words taught by John Wesley, founder of Methodism: 1) Do no harm; 2) Do good; 3) Follow the ordinance of God, such as prayer, searching the Scripture, and fasting.

Hanke told the gathering about the Wesley Class Meetings formed by John Wesley in order to provide accountability for the participants. Today, these same type meetings can be held by Zoom. Participants ask each other "How is your soul today?" "Where did God try to lead you?" and "Where will you go to become an 'on-growing' disciple next week?"

"Today is only the beginning of what we can do together," he concluded.



Pandemic 'good for business,' says men's ministry executive

"You might say 'the pandemic has been pretty good for business'."

That's what Dr. Rick Vance told 11 participants in a September 17 on-line meeting of the Men's Ministry Committee of the General Commission on UM Men.

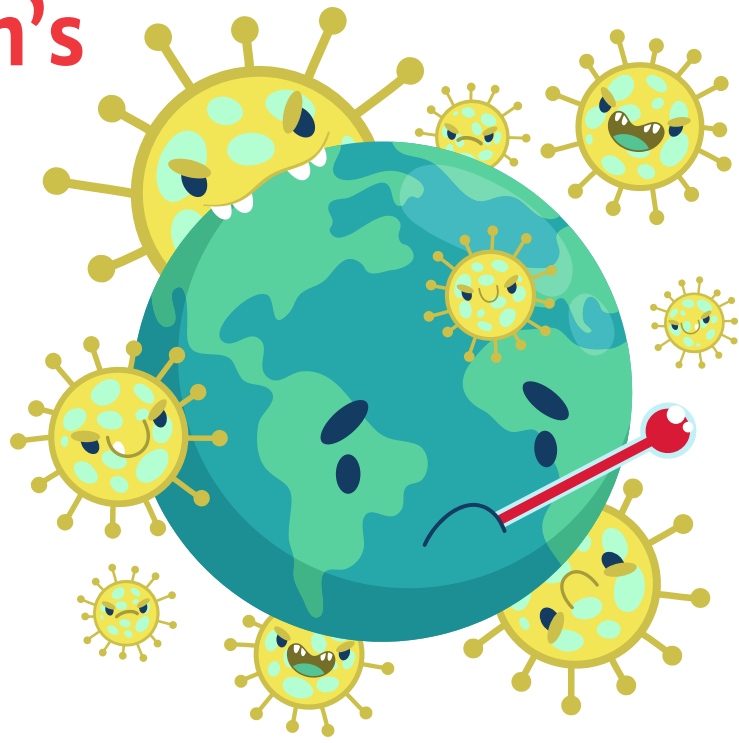
The director of the Center for Men's Ministry explained that the virus and social isolation has slowed things down so men have begun to seek answers to troubling spiritual issues. "There has been an exponential increase in requests for resources during the pandemic," he said.

Rick noted an increase in the number of virtual Class Meetings, a gathering of eight to ten people who talk about their experiences with God. The classes are based on a practice introduced by John Wesley as describe by Dr. Kevin Watson in his book, *The Class Meeting, Reclaiming a Forgotten and Essential Small Group Experience*. These meetings center on ways to put discipleship into action. It is not about knowing more; it is about doing more.

Last fall Gil and Rick led a total of four Class Meetings. Participants in those meetings have subsequently formed their own groups.



The Rev. Dr. Rick Vance is director of the Center for Men's Ministries at the General Commission on UM Men.



An increase number of resources

"This year, we published three new resources," said Rick. "The first, *Mission Stories from a Reluctant Volunteer* by Gil Hanke, is given to those who provide financial support for the commission. The second, *Thirty Stops on the Journey*, is a 30-day devotional sent to all charter subscribed churches. The third resource is a virtual publication entitled *United Methodist Men Pray for Peace with Justice*; it is available for anyone to download."

The commission continues to provide *Amending Through Faith*, an eight-week study series for men who are passionate about ending violence against women.

The commission also provided a video to conference presidents of UM Men to use in their conference sessions. The staff also posted a number of videos of webinars addressing different topics and videos of five national days of prayer are available at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_9MW6WKOeywHdSARau8Kxg.

DEEPLY ROOTED PEOPLE OF GOD

[UMC.org/PeopleOfGod](https://www.UMC.org/PeopleOfGod)

POWERED BY United Methodist Communications

Teach your kids to be caretakers

By Tom Tozer and Bill Black

“Be Kind, Rewind” was the message inserted in every VCR case 20 years ago. For those of you too young to be familiar with it, VCR stood for Videocassette Recorder which played the encased tape which held the movie you wanted to see. The idea behind the notice was to ask each user to rewind the tape so the next person could begin at the beginning. It was a modest request. Still, we recall having to rewind the tape we got from the store before watching the movie because someone rushed it back to the Blockbuster drop box. Yes there were actually big box store where you went to get your movie for the evening. Now, both VCR tapes and Blockbuster have ended up in a galaxy far, far away.

Incendiary

There is bigger casualty—Kindness. There seems to be a gradual leak in the sphere we live on. Sure, there are pockets of kindness here and there, but these days, and for various reasons, we have to be careful about our potentially ‘incendiary’ bumper stickers, the flags we fly, and the masks we wear or don’t wear. People are quick to take sides. Too often we fear others or engage prejudice. Too quickly we judge what someone looks like or ask, “What group are you with?” before inquiring “What do you think?” A thought from the wrong association or one spark of disagreement and look out.

Dad, you and your kids live in a polarized and confusing environment. We all do. What can you do to encourage your children to care about others who have a different opinion or who are less fortunate? How do we develop understanding for others who suffer from poverty, bigotry, illness, lack of resources, ridicule, banishment, or poor parenting?



Tom Tozer and Bill Black are authors of *Dads2Dads: Tools for Raising Teenagers*. Like them on Facebook and follow them on Twitter at [Dads2Dadsllc](#). Contact them at tomandbill@Dads2Dadsllc.com.

Tell ‘n’ show

First, pay attention to your kids. Listen to them. Show them that what they say and feel matters. Be a good example. Teach your children that everyone doesn’t live like they do. Let your children see you offering an encouraging word or going to the aid of someone who needs help. If you model kindness, that will stick in their minds and grow as they grow. Tell them but also show them.

Ease the burden

Teach your children to “judge not.” Open your kids’ eyes to need in the real world. Take them for a drive (or let them drive you), and tour the streets and the alleys. Point out people who live with fewer benefits than you. Show them neighborhoods without that convenient super grocery. Note the people who rely on public transportation because they don’t have access to an operational vehicle. See people who can hardly walk across the street before the light changes. Let them see and think about the person pushing a shopping cart full of everything he or she owns. Help your son or daughter reflect on his or her personal benefits that others may not have. Ask what he or she could do to help lessen the struggle, make the journey just a little easier for someone else. Then, dad, pull over to the curb and show them how it’s done. If you hesitate or are too embarrassed to do that, imagine the unintended lesson you have instilled in your kids.

Get nose

Helping others takes care, compassion and courage. Take your kids to a children’s ward in a hospital for an age-appropriate lesson. Young people model much of their behavior—some not good—after their peers. Check out your children’s friends. Get involved in your child’s habits and lifestyle. Sure, it’s a bit intrusive ... but who’s the parent here? If you don’t get involved in their lives now ... they may not let you in later.

Be kind. Rewind. It’s not too late to start over.

A new way to inspire local church giving!

United Methodists are donating to local churches in honor of someone who’s made a difference to them, then posting on social media to inspire others to do the same. Resources are available to help you launch the campaign in your church and community!

Learn more at

ResourceUMC.org/IGiveUMC



Why you should avoid a crash diet

By Dr. Bryant Stamford

Health experts warn against going on a crash diet. Even so, there always seems to be a new “revolutionary” crash diet scheme guaranteed to work that grabs attention, and fatty Americans jump on board in droves eager to shed lots of weight quickly. Ironically, they do so despite the fact they have been down this road before, and some have tried the same approach several times. The old saying, “Fool me once shame on you, fool me twice shame on me,” applies here.

Crash diets don’t work because they go against the wisdom of the body. Here’s why.

Body reactions to crash diets

When you cut your daily energy (caloric) intake drastically to the level of semi-starvation, you set in motion a self-defeating series of events. This is because the body knows its survival depends on having an abundant ongoing supply of energy, and in response to consuming too little energy the body will take steps to conserve it. The bigger the reduction in energy intake, the bigger the steps taken to conserve it.

The first step will be to reset the body’s metabolism at a lower level. In other words, you burn fewer calories per minute when at rest. Let’s say your resting metabolic rate is 1.2 calories per minute, but it drops to 1.0. That’s a drop of 0.2 calories per minute, which doesn’t seem like a lot, but it’s

ongoing all day long. Therefore, you have $0.2 \times 60 \text{ minutes} \times 24 \text{ hours} = 288$ calories you are no longer burning off each day.

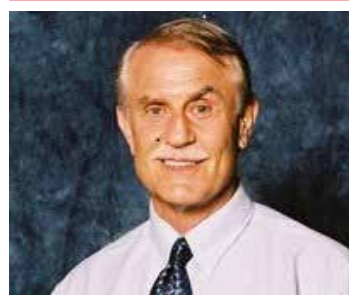
The second step is to sacrifice muscle mass. Muscle mass makes up approximately 30 to 40 percent of the total body mass in a typical adult. That’s a huge amount and it accounts for most of the body’s metabolic rate because it takes a lot of energy to feed your muscles, even when they are at rest. Therefore, the body reasons that a good way to dampen metabolic rate even further is to get rid of as much muscle mass as possible.

Ironically, when you cut calories severely on a crash diet, the body will dump muscle mass while zealously holding onto fat. This is the dirty little secret behind losing weight quickly on a crash diet. You lose a bunch of muscle mass, which means you shed pounds quickly because you can lose muscle five times faster than losing fat.

Rebounding

Fortunately, the vast majority of folks who attempt foolish crash diets soon abandon them. When they do, does this mean the body goes back to where it was, packing on lost muscle mass and increasing the metabolic rate to normal levels? That depends on how much weight you lost and for how long. Here is an extreme example.

Contestants from the former TV program “The Biggest Loser” were studied scientifically to determine the effects of huge weight losses in a short period of time. It was reported that the metabolic rate of contestants fell dramatically as their bodyweight plummeted. More recently, a study published in the journal *Obesity* took it a step further and examined how long it takes after the diet is over for the metabolic rate to rebound and return to normal.



Bryant Stamford is a professor of kinesiology and integrative physiology at Hanover College in Indiana. This article is courtesy of the Louisville Courier Journal.



On average, subjects in this research study lost nearly 40 percent of their body weight. This equated to an average loss of 128 pounds (from 327 pounds to 199). Accompanying the weight loss, subjects experienced a drop in their metabolic rate of 23 percent.

Fast forward six years. What happened? Subjects were struggling mightily to keep the weight off, and most found themselves back to their original weight or close to it, and some were even heavier. That’s bad news, but worse, the metabolic rate was measured again and was still well below where it was prior to losing the weight. In other words, they were burning fewer calories per day, which makes managing their weight more difficult.

The bottom line

Crash diets are fools’ gold. They promise quick weight loss and they deliver. The bad news is, you want to lose fat, not muscle, and you want to keep the weight off. Unfortunately, you don’t get either one. Much of the weight that is lost is muscle, and it comes back fast, along with extra body fat. Worse, if metabolic rate remains suppressed, managing your weight will be more difficult than it was prior to the diet.

Like everything in life, if it’s worth doing, it’s worth doing right. Take it slow and limit weight loss to just a couple of pounds a month by a subtle reduction of calories, healthier food choices, and lots of moderate daily exercise.

Men honor former secretary during Civil Rights struggle

Men of Centenary UMC presented Gloria Bynum Wyatt with a Susanna Wesley Award of Excellence for her service as a church secretary and secretary of the former Memphis-McKendree District of UM Women.

A life-long member of Centenary and the granddaughter of a Methodist minister, she served as church secretary during the church’s active involvement with the Civil Rights movement. She was secretary at meetings when Martin Luther King and the Rev. James Lawson established strategies during the Memphis sanitation strike,

She is currently secretary of the Administrative Council, secretary of UM Women, church communications coordinator, a member of the Membership Care Committee and a member of the Minnie Williams sub-group.

As a Bible study coordinator, she helped lead people to a greater awareness of God’s living presence, and her behind-the-scene efforts inspired others to serve. She is God’s grace in action.





PINE BLUFF, ARKANSAS

UM Men provide community services

UM Men of Christ of the Hills UMC annually offer three free services to their community. The men provide free shredding of documents, recycling of electronics and safety checks of automobiles.



UM men check 20 items on cars including lights, tires, wipers, belts and hoses.

CANTONMENT, FLORIDA

Men operate pumpkin patch

For 25 years, men of Allen Memorial UMC have operated pumpkin patches.

The Molino (Fla.) Volunteer Fire Department, along with junior fighters, and volunteers from the Northview High School helped unload the pumpkin truck.



For 25 years men of Allen Memorial UMC have operated pumpkin patches. The Molino (Fla.) Volunteer Fire Department, along with junior fighters, and volunteers from the Northern High School helped unload the pumpkins.

ALPHARETTA, GEORGIA

Men's Bible study joins white and black congregations

More than 50 men from St. James UMC and First UMC joined together for a series of Bible studies and discussions on race and reconciliation.

St. James's congregation is predominantly black and Alpharetta First UMC members are predominantly white. The two churches are less than a mile apart and members of the churches cross paths in their subdivisions and community. In fact, two men (one from each church) who are neighbors and pass each other on daily walks, wondered if there might be an opportunity for their respective men's groups to work together. They introduced Kem Fleming, chair of St. James' Men's Ministry, to Chris Day, chair of Alpharetta First Men's Ministries.

"With the current climate in our society, we thought it might be the right time for us to talk about race and faith," said Kem.

Together, leaders from the two churches put together a four-week Bible Study series.

"The Bible study met at night virtually," said Kem. "We had some tough conversations, but for the entire series, we had an average of 50 to 60 men on each call. We had great dialogue and great biblical instruction on racism."

The session was so fruitful that the men of St. James reached out to another neighboring congregation, Mount Pisgah UMC, to launch a similar series.



AURORA, ILLINOIS

Church conducts drive-in services



The Rev. Derek Rogers preaches at the parking lot of Aurora Christian School, Photo by Al Benson.

Flowing Forth UMC is holding drive-in services due to COVID-19 restrictions. The Rev. Derek Rogers, lead pastor, preached a series on

the Book of Revelation.

A greeter directed drivers where to park and worshippers tuned their car radios to an AM station to hear the music, prayers, and sermon. Following the service families were invited to leave donations for a local food pantry.

MARION, IOWA

UM Men lead storm recovery efforts

Cedar Rapids and surrounding areas suffered major damage from an Aug. 10 storm when wind gusts exceeding 140 mph left a 700-mile path of destruction across six Midwestern states.

By that evening, individuals were out with chainsaws clearing trees and the Iowa UM Conference disaster relief coordinators were fielding calls from churches wanting to help. The Rev. Jason Collier, pastor of Ainsworth Community Church and United Church of Crawfordsville, said a team from his churches spent two days at a single home.

"We had four guys, nine chainsaws and a skid steer — there's just that much work," he said. "But we're only an hour from here and with this much devastation, you can't not help."

A crew from Marion First UMC helped strip the shingles from Weaver's damaged roof and put up a tarp to keep rain from getting in. Weaver was happy to find out who was coming to help.

"I was raised Methodist by my mom, and you could say I still kinda lean Methodist," he said.

Iowa Conference received a \$10,000 solidarity grant from the UM Committee on Relief.



Jesse Parcher, part of a volunteer team working with Marion First United Methodist Church, flattens roofing nails so they won't tear a plastic tarp while he makes emergency repairs to a storm-damaged home in Marion, Iowa.

Photo by Mike DuBose, UM News.

FORT CAMPELL, KENTUCKY

Chaplain provides devotional books

For 18 year, Captain Nicholas Wright, now serving as chaplain of Ft. Campbell Army Post, has been giving out copies of *Strength for Service to God and Country*.

Wright recently ministered to the families and fellow soldiers of two Army pilots who were tragically killed in a helicopter accident in California.

Since January 1, 2020, the SFS team has distributed more than 15,000 devotional books to military men and women as well as first responders.



Larry Coppock, top staff executive of Strength for Service Inc., meets with Chaplain Wright near the Army base.

SULPHUR, LOUISIANA

Baton Rouge church aids storm victims



When Hurricane Laura hit the Lake Charles area of southwest Louisiana, Maplewood UMC lost its fellowship hall, its roof, and stained glass windows.

The Rev. Brady Whitton, pastor of First UMC in Baton Rouge, led an 8-member team to help Sulphur area residents recover from the devastating Category 4 storm.

“When Baton Rouge was hit by a 2016 hurricane, people came to help us; we wanted to return the favor,” said Brady in an interview with *Louisiana Now*. The team was just one of hundreds of volunteers who provided relief funds and on-the-scene recovery help.

SARANAC LAKE, NEW YORK

Men deliver groceries and ballot requests

During the pandemic, the men’s group of the First UMC delivered groceries to seniors and those with underlying health conditions.

Those bags contained information about how to request and send in absentee ballots for the November elections.

ALLIANCE, OHIO

The Apple Dumpling Gang

For 19 years Union Avenue UMC has been selling dumplings to raise money for local non-profits and mission projects.

The coronavirus pandemic changed production processes from a 12-member crew working on one day to a mask-wearing five-member crew working multiple days.

An apple peeler, a dough maker, two rollers, and a bagger observe social distancing to produce the popular product.

The project was begun in 2002 by UM Women, but it was taken over by UM Men in 2008.



Members of the Apple Dumpling Gang observe social distancing guidelines.



BEAVERCREEK, OHIO

Golf tournament raises funds for devotional books

One hundred and eleven golfers raised \$825 to print *Strength for Service* books during the 8th Annual Leo Scholl Fall Golf Classic held at The Country Club of the North.

“This is the second year for players to learn about and help *Strength for Service*,” said Leo Scholl, co-founder of the annual golf classic. Each player received a copy of the book.

Bill Nance of the *Faith and Friends Internet Radio* was at the tournament and interviewed Larry Coppock, executive director of Strength for Service Inc.



NORTH, SOUTH CAROLINA

UM Men seek new projects

UM Men of the Orange Circuit were taking down an aluminum wheel chair from a mobile home when they noticed hazardous steps in and out of the home next door.

The Rev. Richard Toy, pastor of the circuit, asked the family if they could build new steps for them.

“Our church is not just waiting for needs to come to us,” said Richard. “We are going out and seeking mission needs and opportunities to be God’s hands and feet to everyone.”

On a separate occasion, members had the opportunity to help 100-year-old Mr. Wannamaker of North. Known for riding his bicycle in his World War II uniform, he was given a battery-operated scooter, but he needed a ramp to get in and out of his home. He had fallen one time while attempting to do so.

In an hour’s time, members of North UMC had him all set to go with a ramp. Members said they were honored to serve him in Jesus’s name.



HOUSTON, TEXAS

Scout helps serve food to 100,000



Jake Aurelio, 13, wanted to earn his Citizenship-in-the-Community Merit Badge for the Boy Scouts. There was only one problem. He could not find an organization open during COVID-19. Eventually, Jake found an answer in his own church, Chapelwood UMC, was organizing a drive-through food pantry on its Fair Haven campus.

Chapelwood serves as the distribution point for the Houston Food Bank. They have served over 100,000 people.

Jake completed his badge requirements after five trips. “But we realized there was a lot more we could do than just packing food,” he said. “We wanted to try handing out food, cleaning, registering. There were a bunch of different jobs to do.”

And they liked going. “You’re there with people who also like doing this,” Jake said. “It’s a good vibe.”

When Jake had to quarantine at home before a dental surgery. He made single-serving bags at home, and later brought 500 bags of food to the church.

PLANTERSVILLE, TEXAS

Son uses dad's devotional book



In 1943, Gordon Galeucia received a copy of *Strength for Service to God and Country* as a Christmas gift from the Ogunquit Baptist Church in Cypress, Texas.

Seventy-seven years later Gordon's son, Gordon Galeucia Jr., still makes daily trips to the well-worn pages of that book of devotions published by the Methodist Publishing House. "Some of

the topics I pass on to the 4th and 5th graders that I work with on Wednesday nights at church," says Gordon."

"My dad passed away in 1987 at my home in La Place, La., says 66-year-old. "All of my siblings called him 'Bumpa,' and now all of my grandchildren call me 'Bumpa'."

Gordon and his wife now live in Plantersville, Texas, 45 miles northwest of his former hometown of Cypress.

Gordon says he was surprised when he visited the [Strength for Service website](#) to find the ministry features the Cy-Fair Volunteer Fire Dept., a fire department that serves Cypress.

"I love this little book," says Gordon.

He hopes the devotional book will encourage readers to memorize passages of Scripture, a practice he describes as creating "long-term success."

PLANO, TEXAS

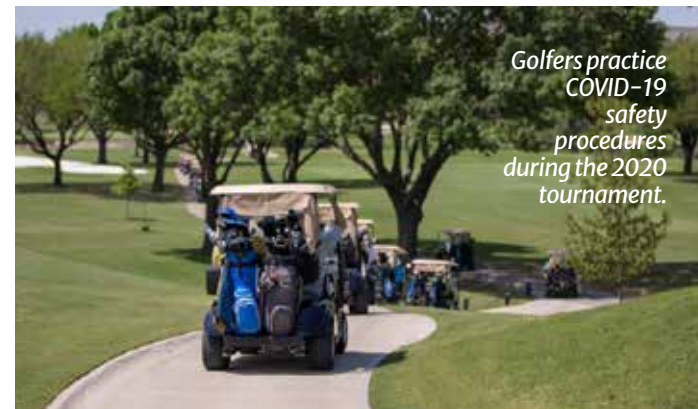
Golf tournament raises scholarship funds

UM Men of St. Andrew UMC annually sponsor two golf tournaments to raise scholarship funds. Because of COVID-19, they only sponsored one in 2020.

The tournament provided funds for the Charles Stokes Seminary Education Fund and the Messenger of Hope Fund.

Retired St. Andrew Pastor Charles Stokes and his wife Louise founded Seminary Education Scholarship. In partnership with Perkins School of Theology, the fund annually provides two \$15,000 scholarships.

The Messenger of Hope Tournament provides \$500 scholarships to high school seniors. In 2019, the fund helped 52 students attend 25 different colleges.



CLEAR BROOK, VIRGINIA

Men help distribute milk

Early in the pandemic stories abounded of farmers dumping milk due to lack of demand. Through a government grant, Ruritan, a community service organization, received weekly shipments of free milk from dairies in Reading, Pa.

With the help of UM Men of Burnt Factory UMC, Ruritans distributed 25,600 gallons of free milk in the Northern Shenandoah Valley.



GLEN ALLEN, VIRGINIA

Bishop receives Silver Torch

The Virginia Annual Conference Ministry of Scouting Team presented a Silver Torch Award to Bishop Sharma D. Lewis.

"When Bishop Lewis first came to our conference in May, 2016, she immediately embraced our Scouting ministry and has continued ever since," said Bill Chaffin, coordinator of Virginia Conference Ministry of Scouting.

The award was presented Oct. 12 at the Virginia Conference Office.

The Silver Torch is awarded to an adult whose exemplary service to Scouting shines beyond their own annual conference.

"Bishop Lewis has supported and lived out a calling to "Go into all the world," said Chaffin. "This has been seen not just by Virginia Conference, her ministry has shown far and wide."



PULASKI, VIRGINIA

Church hold services in baseball stadium

Members of First UMC gather for worship at Calfee Park, a minor-league baseball stadium, home to the Pulaski Yankees. The pews are stadium seats. The congregation is not looking up to the pulpit, but looking down on the field where the pastor wears a ball cap. The choir sits in the dugout.



SOUTH CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA

Church presents books to first responders

First UMC and First Church's UM Men presented a letter of appreciation and *Strength for Service* books to first responders during a ceremony at South Charleston City Hall.

The letters and books were to be distributed to all 93 of the city's police officers and firefighters as well as the city's humane officer. Copies also were to be presented to Mayor Frank Mullens and City Manager Rick Atkinson.

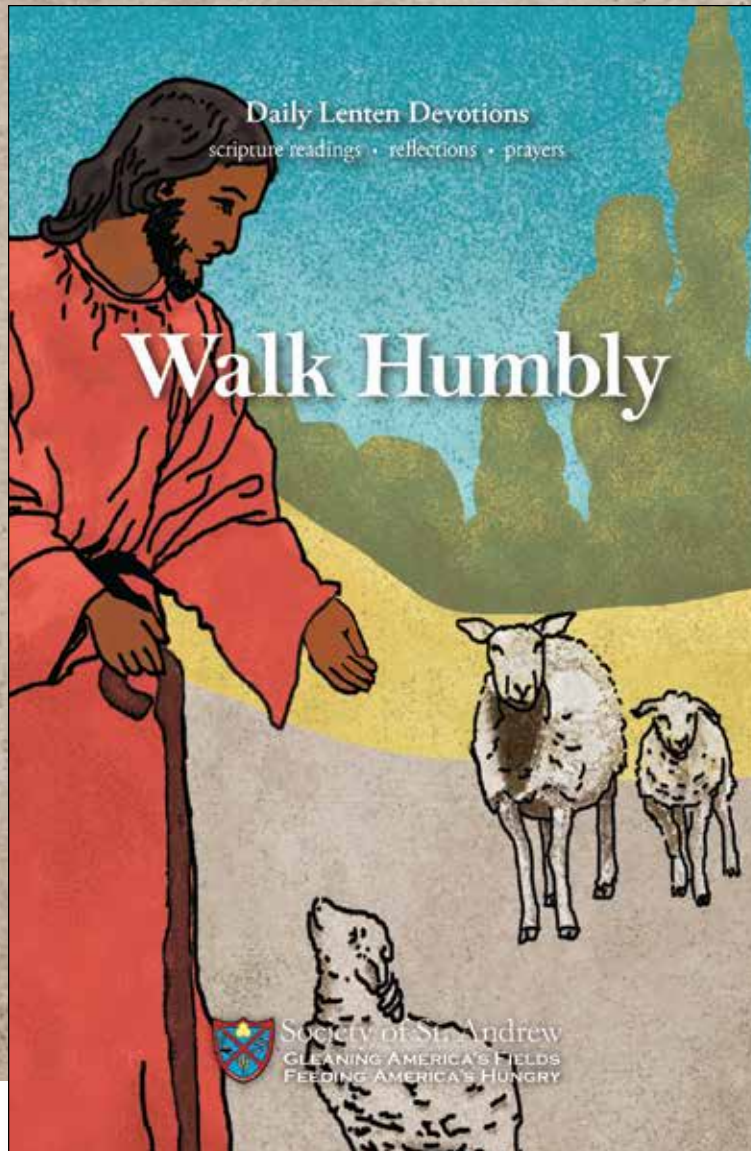
UM Men meet via Zoom at 9 a.m. on the first Saturday of each month.





Society of St. Andrew
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FEEDING AMERICA'S HUNGRY

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