

wesleyan life

THE MAGAZINE OF THE WESLEYAN CHURCH

EMPOWER

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HONEST HONORING HOPEFUL

EMPOWERED *to*

LIVE

I have had the distinct privilege of growing up in the Wesleyan Holiness tradition where “the scriptural truth concerning the doctrine and experience of holiness” was preached and the mission of spreading the holiness message around the globe was embraced. Both sides of my family tree have included holiness clergy and lay people dedicated to serving the Lord and sharing the beauty of God’s sanctifying work with any who would listen. And I confess ... that desire to live and proclaim God’s loving, enabling, empowering and holy work lives deep within me too. It is from this well of desire to tell others (and with tears of gratitude and thankfulness) that this spring magazine was born.

The spring 2026 issue’s theme is “Empowered.”

As Wesleyans, we believe God has called his people to be a holy people, *set free* and *set apart*, for the sake of the world. Through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, we are “separated from

sin unto God” and “enabled to love God,” **empowered** to live sent, act justly, love mercy, walk humbly and serve the Lord our God well (Micah 6:8).

As we explore the Empowered theme in this magazine, we are weaving in and reinforcing The Wesleyan Church’s identity as people of God, a holiness people — past, present and future — as we prepare for the upcoming General Conference in May 2026. We will theologically explore sanctification, bear witness to a spirit-filled life unearthed from Wesleyan Archives, look at holiness in our time and explore the empowerment of Wesleyans to move, live on mission and prepare for the future.

Our desire is to encourage each of us to prayerfully reflect on where God has led us in the past, is directing us in the present and calling us to in the future as a Wesleyan movement, empowered to be a holy people on mission in the world. 🙌



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THE wesleyan CHURCH

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wesleyan life

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15th

GENERAL CONFERENCE of THE WESLEYAN CHURCH

The 15th General Conference is happening **May 17-20, 2026**, in Marion, Indiana! Join us as we pray to be EMPOWERED by the Holy Spirit to BOLDLY embrace the call of Acts 1:8.



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wesleyan life

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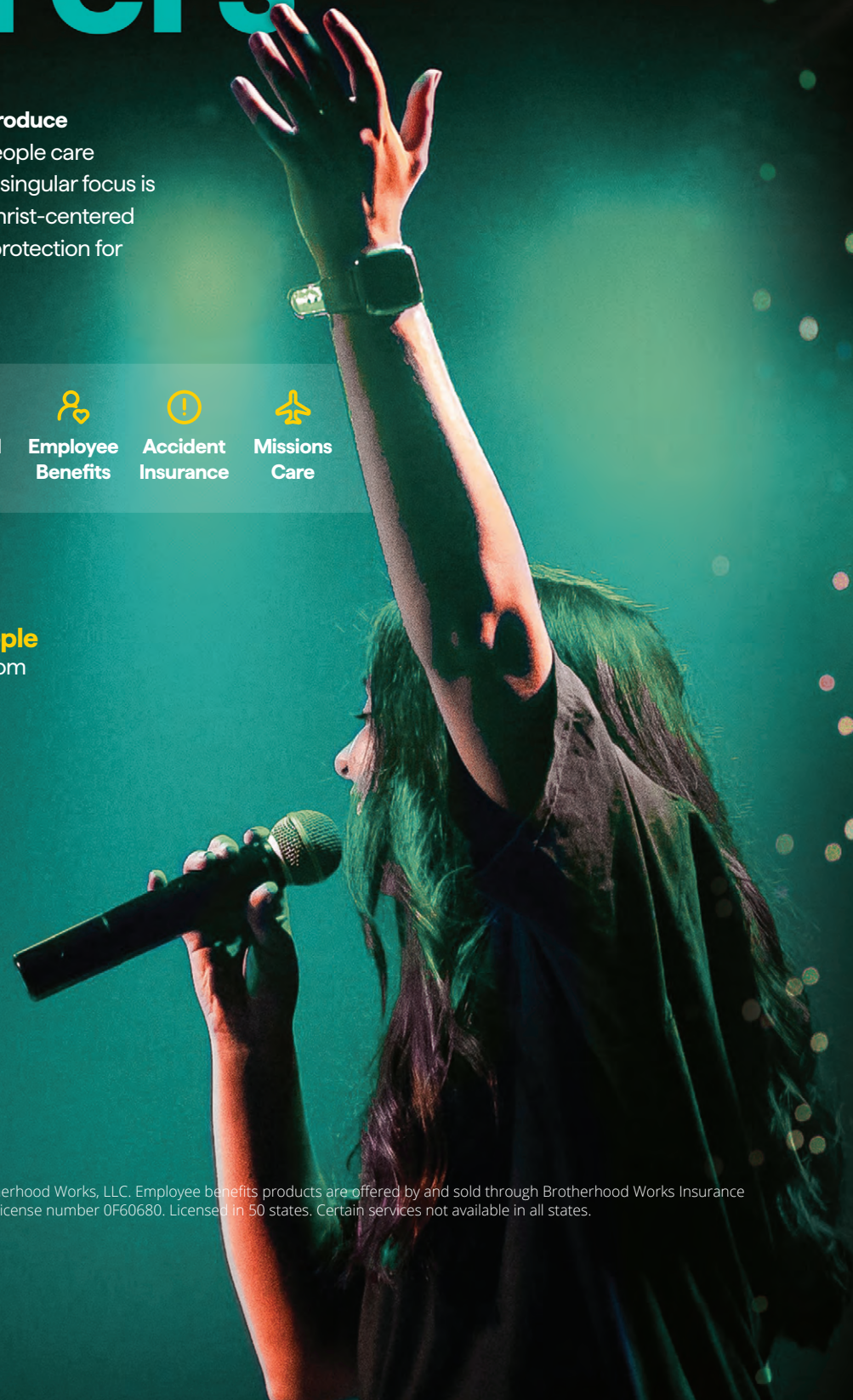
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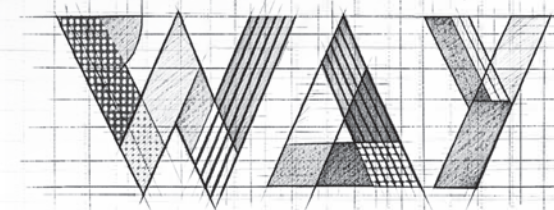
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Teaching



EMPOWERED
all the



ALONG

Amy Webb is the chief executive officer of Future Today Strategy Group. She and her colleagues work with companies and governments to help them anticipate future trends. The future is her business; however, on November 13, 2022, while appearing as a guest on “This Week in Tech” she made this interesting comment, “I am a futurist, but we look backwards twice as much as we look forward.”¹

The task of any institution’s archives is to preserve the past, but hopefully it does so in a way that illuminates the present and provides direction for the future. This is our goal for Wesleyan Archives.

I remember walking through The Wesleyan Church (TWC) archives’ storage area in 2019 for the first time. There I found old handwritten conference (district) journals from 1843-1900. Some of the writing contained on the pages was fading to the point of almost

being unreadable. I was certain in a few years we would lose them. These precious journals contain history about The Wesleyan Church’s first 60 years and her holy witness through those years. Much of this history is unknown to us because — for all practical purposes — these resources have been inaccessible. Reflecting on what was before me, I turned to a colleague and said, “These journals need to be transcribed so that we don’t lose the information, and hopefully the day will come that they will be made available to researchers.”

Even as I said it, I thought the likelihood of it happening anytime soon was small. Who could we find that would do the transcription? We didn’t have the money to pay for it. It would be a labor of love from a volunteer. For over two years, I shared this need but to no avail.

Then on January 14, 2022, my wife Sherri and I had a conversation with Jan Schmidt. I

can’t remember all that was said that night, but somewhere during our conversation, Jan mentioned that she had been reading old family documents and had been transcribing them. Immediately, I bookmarked that comment in my brain. As we were leaving, I asked Jan if she would make time for a conversation about a special archives project. As they say, the rest is history. She embraced the idea.

For the last four years Jan Schmidt has faithfully chipped away at this transcription task. As of the writing of this article, she has completed 128 journals from six conferences (Michigan, Miami, Rochester, St. Lawrence, Syracuse, Zanesville)!

Little by little, Jan is recovering historical tidbits that have faded due to time and lack of access.

One such story resurrected through Jan’s transcription work is that of Hall DeLand. On July 27, 2025, Jan emailed me the written

¹ “This Week in Tech: TWiT.Tv,” accessed December 30, 2025, <https://twit.tv/shows/this-week-in-tech/episodes/901>.

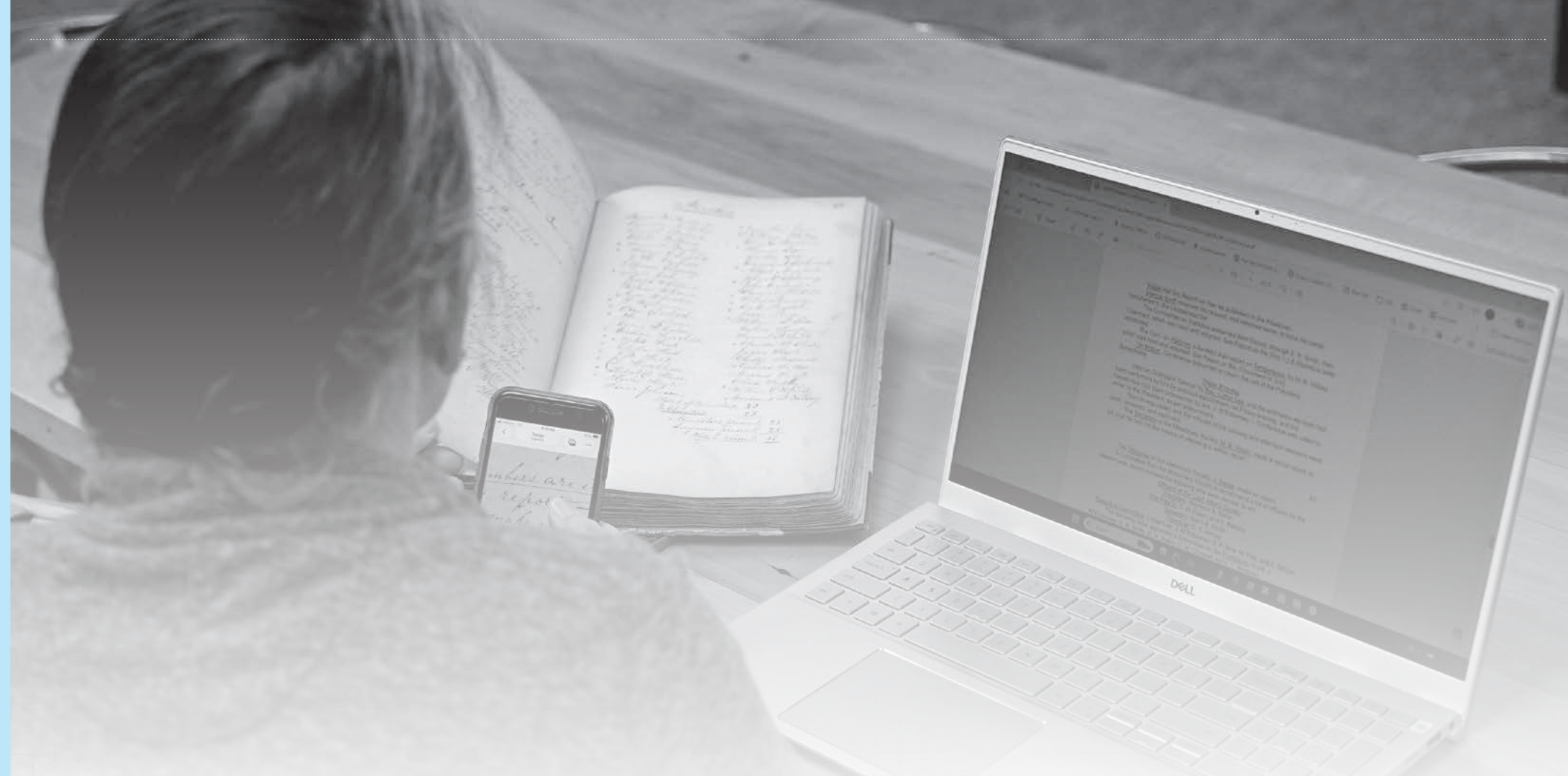


“

These precious journals contain *history* about The Wesleyan Church's first 60 years and her holy witness through those years.”



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transcription of the 1867 Michigan Conference Journal. Her email began with these words: “With this collection, there is a bunch of interesting stuff re: Hall DeLand ...”

Hall DeLand ... who was Hall DeLand? The conference journal listed him as a lay member of the Committee on Pastoral Relations. While this finding in and of itself was not noteworthy, Jan's further research on DeLand revealed that he was also known by another name: “The Nighthawk.” Her efforts eventually led to a 2020 newspaper article listing DeLand as one of the many Wesleyan Methodist lay people working on the Underground Railroad. Along the Railroad, there were “stations” or safe houses whose operators were known as the “stationmaster.” There were also “conductors,” whose primary task was directing and transporting runaway slaves. Hall DeLand served both as stationmaster and conductor on the Underground Railroad in Monroe, Michigan!²

Why was DeLand known as the Nighthawk? In “The History of the Harroun Family in America,” Ernest Comstock shares, “There was a station in Maumee, operated by A.C. Winslow, who operated a foundry. From there, if there was no close pursuit, fugitives were brought either to Toledo or taken via Detroit Ave. to Monroe, Michigan, and then across to Canada. If the pursuers

² David L. Eby, “The Story of Monroe's Underground Railroad,” Monroe News, accessed January 22, 2026, <https://www.monroenews.com/story/news/2020/10/19/story-of-monroes-underground-railroad/42859325>.



“

He bears witness to the essential role of laity in the church's ministry and to the *empowering*, set apart work of the Spirit in and through God's people.”

were close, the runaway slaves were taken to this Sylvania station, kept by David Harroun, Jr. and from there, Hall DeLand, the ‘Night Hawk,’ took them to the French settlers along the Detroit River, who ferried them across that stream to Canada.”³ DeLand's nightly escapades of transporting slaves — fueled by holy conviction — earned him his aptly suited pseudonym of Nighthawk.

Without question, DeLand put himself in harm's way to free runaway slaves even while pursuers were close. David Eby of the Monroe County Historical Society states, “He (DeLand) had a wagon built with a false bottom where he would place the slaves, then have bags of grain or hay lay on top of the false floor to hide them during trips ... He and what he did for many runaway slaves needs to be permanently remembered ...”⁴

Hall DeLand represents much of what we celebrate about our founding. He bears witness to the essential role of laity in the church's ministry and to the empowering, set apart work of the Spirit in and through God's people. DeLand stands as another example of many in the Wesleyan Methodist Connection who had as their North Star the justice they saw emanating from the Bible and did not waiver amid a politically and religiously charged time in our country's history. 🐦

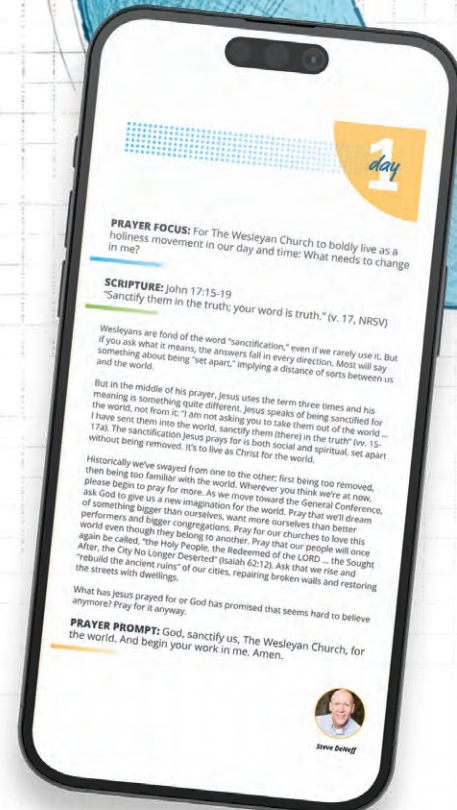
³ Ernest B. Comstock, History of the Harroun Family in America, Seven Generations: Descendants of Alexander Harroun of Colrain, MA, 1691-1784 (n.d.), 58.

⁴ Eby, “The Story of Monroe's.”



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Empowered for the *next* quadrennium

Pray for a spirit of unity during the 15thGC that will overflow into the next quadrennium.



WHAT GENERAL CONFERENCE DOES

Every four years, The Wesleyan Church gathers for General Conference to engage in a rhythm of business, worship and community. Together, Wesleyans prayerfully ask for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit as General Conference delegates seek God's will through elections and memorial voting for the future of the church.



RECEIVES MEMORIALS



SETS DIRECTION



ELECT LEADERS



38
BOARD MEMBERS



19
INTERNATIONAL DELEGATES



9
FRATERNAL DELEGATES



171
CLERGY DELEGATES



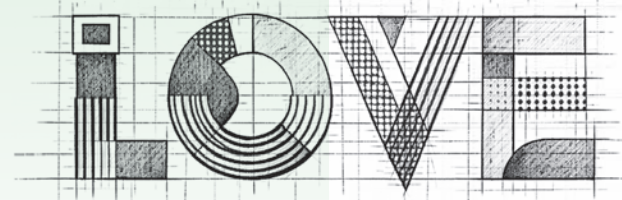
171
LAY DELEGATES



Pray for the 15thGC delegates as they seek to discern God's good, acceptable and perfect will for The Wesleyan Church.



HOLINESS AND THE CHURCH: *living*



IN A DISTRACTED AGE

The GPS was accurate ... or it had been the last time anyone looked. The travelers trusted their memory, assuming familiarity would keep them on course. The drift happened gradually. Each adjustment felt reasonable but eventually delivered them to new, unexpected territories.

Spiritual drift rarely announces itself but slips in quietly, disguised as faithfulness or routine.

Churches keep busy and seats stay filled but somewhere beyond the noise, the call to holiness, to be utterly transformed by Christ, begins to fade.

John 21:1-17 gives us a striking picture of this slow drift and Christ's gentle restoration. After the resurrection, the disciples returned to familiar routines. Familiarity is comfortable, safe and predictable. It's natural to return to what you know when we're unsure, exhausted or spiritually dulled. The posture of holiness is shaped as we repeatedly return to Jesus instead of escaping to familiar shores. In that early morning fog, Jesus calls from the shore, not

to shame them, but to reorient and remind them who they are.

For some, the term holiness is old-fashioned, conjuring images of musty hymnals and others' high expectations rather than the joy and peace it's meant to bring. We distanced ourselves from the "language of perfection" to avoid accusations of legalism or



Holiness is not the goal, nor a spotless perfection or moral performance, but is a *response* to grace initiated by Christ."

judgement. Like Peter, we're zealous, sincere and yet easily disoriented by cultural tides or personal insecurities. As Jesus did on that shoreline, Christ calls the church back again, in our cultural moment, not with condemnation but with invitation.

An increasing trend currently, shaped by the pursuit of self-development and achievement, reframes holiness as an individualized wellness. Fulfillment, happiness and personal meaning become primary goals, replacing the Spirit's deep and sometimes uncomfortable work of purifying the heart. *Holiness is not the goal*, nor a spotless perfection or moral performance, but is a response to grace initiated by Christ.

John Wesley described holiness as perfect love: "A heart habitually filled with the love of God and neighbor." Jesus embodies this in John 21 as he restores Peter, not through lecture, but through relationship. Christ calls, "Do you love me?" and Peter echoes three denials. Each question is a healing

act. Each answer is a missional call.

Holiness is not a destination we earn or an escape from the things of our world. It's the wholeness of God's character reflected in us as we respond to his grace. Reduced to a list of dos and don'ts, we risk building an image of holiness on our own terms, forgetting that the miracle always begins with his direction not our effort.

This humbling, freeing realization forces us to question our role. Our part is surprisingly small. Holiness is the Spirit's work. Like the disciples waiting in the boat, we aren't the ones who create the catch. We simply cast the nets where he tells us. Waiting becomes formation, stillness becomes preparation, readiness requires patience to receive grace and grace sends us outward.

In John 21, each loving affirmation is followed by a missional command: "Feed my lambs," "Tend my sheep." Holiness is love in motion, shaping our speech, generosity and concern for the forgotten. It compels us to move beyond ourselves into the world's wounds with Christ's healing presence.

Our Wesleyan history echoes this shoreline moment. Holiness has always had a public face that stands in places of injustice with stubborn hope shaped by grace. The early Methodist movement stepped into prisons, mines, hospitals, workhouses and streets where the poor were ignored. They fought slavery, advocated for labor justice and refused to let holiness become retreat. As Peter restored and recommissioned, they carried holy love's fire to the places Christ loves most.




A life ignited by holy love becomes its own *witness*. It draws others toward the shore where Christ is already at work."

This central truth is embedded in tradition: To be made holy is to be made useful to God for the sake of others. Holiness is not withdrawal, but engagement. It's the Spirit's conviction that love must take sides on behalf of the vulnerable, oppressed and overlooked.

A famous line often attributed to Wesley reads, "set yourself on fire with passion, and people will come for miles to watch you burn." This sentiment fits the movement he led, echoing the moment Peter leaped into the sea to reach Jesus. A life ignited by holy love becomes its own witness. It draws others toward the shore where Christ is already at work.

A holy church doesn't hide its fire. She carries it into the darkness patiently, humbly and with the same Spirit-filled courage Christ breathed into Peter on that quiet morning by the sea. Just as Jesus restored and recommissioned his disciples in John 21, he continues calling to his church today:

"Do you love me? ... [then] feed my sheep." 



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EMPOWERED *to*

MOVE

For many years, I've walked with the Lord through seasons of hardship and great joy. Through all of it, one practice has anchored me: learning to seek his wisdom first. The book of Proverbs speaks often about wise counsel and following instruction, and over time I've come to a settled conclusion: God knows everything. He's the Creator of the universe, master architect of all things and knows far more than I ever could.

Because of that, I've learned to focus my energy on communing with him regularly, inviting his wisdom into my day-to-day life, decisions, actions and even my perspective. That posture has completely reshaped how I understand partnership with God on the earth.

Scripture is clear that God has a plan and purpose for all things. He is strategic, deliberate and thoughtful. If we truly believe his Word is true, that he is faithful and has created us with intention, then it follows that he also chooses to work

through his people to accomplish his purposes. Throughout the Bible, we see God initiating his plans through the obedience of ordinary people. When they resist, there are consequences. When they obey, there's fruit. God doesn't always move with a mighty hand, rearranging everything instantly. More often, he places his hand on people, empowering them to move *with* him.



THE BURDEN ITSELF IS OFTEN THE *invitation.*"

I've learned to see my life not as something I offer *to* God, but as something I live *with* Him. Empowerment, then, isn't about independence. It's about partnership.

When I think about being *empowered*, the Great Commission

in Matthew 28 comes to mind. Jesus tells his disciples to go and make disciples but not before declaring that all authority has been given to him. He sends them out under that authority. This matters. We don't go in our own strength, wisdom or confidence. We go empowered by Almighty God working in us, through us, and with us to advance his kingdom. When we truly believe that, our words, actions and lives begin to align with that reality.

One way God invites us into that partnership is by placing compassion and holy burdens in our hearts. Some are grieved by homelessness. Others are stirred by the lack of safe spaces for children in their communities. For me, I've always been deeply moved by the suffering of vulnerable children, particularly those experiencing abuse and neglect. That burden eventually led me into foster care, where obedience required more than prayer. It required presence, sacrifice and trust. God did not remove the need. He invited me into it.

What I've learned is this: the burden itself is often the invitation. We pray for God to send someone, while quietly ignoring the possibility that we may be the answer we're asking him to provide.


We've been *empowered to move*. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to dwell within us, equipping us to go, disciple, teach and model what it looks like to walk with him. The Holy Spirit is the fuel God has given us to address the world's brokenness. God's solution to the problems of the earth is not passive waiting, but yielded people who are *willing to move with him*, build with him and trust him with the outcome.

I'll leave you with something the Lord spoke to me directly, and share

it exactly as it was given to me:

"I am pouring my Spirit out on all flesh which then *empowers them to move* in my Spirit. They take me wherever they go. Where I send them, my presence goes along. The cares and burdens they have are mine. Instead of asking me to do something about a situation ask me: How can I be used to affect change? This life is about *partnership*. My people aren't just to wait around for the genie in the bottle to grant their wishes. **I AM almighty God.** I invited my children to be great and to have impact with me. Once you ask me what you can do, follow the breadcrumbs. Listen for the prompting of the Holy Spirit. What feels like peace? What will bring

God glory? How can your skills and abilities be used to answer the prayers of others? How can people be blessed and desire to know me because of you? My people are conduits. I work in them and outside of them. I'm waiting for people to take the first step. You aren't waiting for me."

We're *not waiting* on God. He's *inviting us to move.* 



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WE PRAY FOR GOD TO *send* SOMEONE, WHILE QUIETLY IGNORING THE POSSIBILITY THAT WE MAY BE THE *answer* WE ARE ASKING HIM TO PROVIDE."

ENGLISH

Sanctified AND sent: A WESLEYAN

REFLECTION

FROM JOHN 17

In John 17:15-19, Jesus was praying for his friends in his final hours. He knew what was coming, not only for himself but also for those who had been with him for the last few years. His request in these verses? That his friends would be protected, sanctified and sent. Another name — holiness.

Wesleyans believe God wants us to be holy. This holiness does not make us free of fault or error; holiness is God using his *power* to provide full salvation — freeing us from sin's power and imparting his truth and love into our hearts. We believe that God can **empower** us to love him fully, which in turn means loving others fully (logically speaking, can we claim to love God fully but not love someone?). This is why many will call us a denomination of hope. Statements like "I am who I am and that can't change," or "this will always be my struggle," or feelings of shame don't

have to be on repeat. Sin's power is replaced with total love.

When I first learned about Wesleyans, I discovered our lifestyle differences. Next, I was taught the doctrine of holiness. But it took me a while to put all the puzzle pieces together. Freedom from sin is beautiful. It feels wonderful to no longer wear those chains. But Jesus' prayer of protection and sanctification (what we call holiness) found in John 17:15-19 was less about what we don't do and more about being free TO love, free TO go. No distractions, no barriers, nothing hindering a person from fully loving God and others. God's holiness protects us from within, enabling us to be fully sent to love others and share his message of truth with the world.

Let me be clear. Although we receive the benefits, we aren't the focus of holiness. Holiness' primary purpose is to magnify the Lord.

As his image bearers, holiness in us is like a mirror that bounces the rays of the sun back to their source. God's love and *power* that transforms lives demonstrates his awesomeness. He's the only one worthy of praise as we discuss holiness! But, as God transforms a heart to love him and others, a secondary component of holiness emerges. Holiness transforms the way a person thinks and behaves, which in turn transforms how that person interacts with others. John and Charles Wesley, church fathers in our tradition, stressed that holiness was meant to be social, experienced within a community and lived out among others.

Jesus didn't want his disciples to be sanctified so they would be more easily accepted as they proclaimed the gospel. It wasn't to make them more likeable. It certainly wasn't to provide wealth and prosperity. His disciples' sanctification was to

ESPAÑOL

Santificados y enviados: UNA

REFLEXIÓN

WESLEYANA

SOBRE JUAN 17

En Juan 17:15-19, Jesús oraba por Sus amigos en Sus últimas horas. Sabía lo que venía, no solo para Él, sino también para quienes habían estado con Él durante los últimos años. ¿Cuál era su petición en estos versículos? Que Sus amigos fueran protegidos, santificados y enviados. Otro nombre para esto: santidad.

Los wesleyanos creemos que Dios desea que seamos santos. Esta santidad no nos hace libres de faltas o errores; la santidad es Dios usando Su *poder* para proveer salvación completa: liberándonos del poder del pecado e infundiendo Su verdad y Su amor en nuestros corazones. Creemos que Dios puede **empoderarnos** para amarlo plenamente, lo cual, a su vez, significa amar plenamente a los demás. Porque, siendo lógicos, ¿podemos afirmar que amamos a Dios por completo y no amar a alguien? Por eso muchos nos

llamarán una denominación de esperanza. Expresiones como "yo soy así y no puedo cambiar" o "ésta siempre será mi lucha", o bien, sentimientos de vergüenza que no tienen que repetirse una y otra vez. El poder del pecado es reemplazado por un amor total.

Cuando conocí por primera vez a los wesleyanos, descubrí nuestras diferencias de estilo de vida. Luego, se me enseñó la doctrina de la santidad. Pero me tomó un tiempo unir todas las piezas del rompecabezas. Ser libres del pecado es una hermosa experiencia. Se siente maravilloso dejar de cargar esas cadenas. Pero la oración de Jesús por protección y santificación (lo que llamamos santidad) en Juan 17:15-19 tenía menos que ver con lo que no hacemos y más con ser libres PARA amar, libres PARA ir. Sin distracciones, sin barreras, sin nada que impida a una persona amar plenamente a Dios y a los demás.

La santidad de Dios nos protege desde dentro, capacitándonos para ser completamente enviados a amar a otros y compartir Su mensaje de verdad con el mundo.

Permítanme ser clara. Aunque recibimos los beneficios, no somos el enfoque de la santidad. El propósito principal de la santidad es magnificar al Señor. Como portadores de Su imagen, la santidad en nosotros es como un espejo que refleja los rayos del sol de vuelta a su fuente. El amor y el *poder* de Dios que transforman vidas demuestran Su grandeza. ¡Él es el único digno de alabanza cuando hablamos de santidad! Sin embargo, cuando Dios transforma un corazón para amarle a Él y a los demás, surge un componente secundario de la santidad. La santidad transforma la manera en que una persona piensa y actúa, lo cual a su vez transforma la manera en que esa persona se relaciona con los demás. Juan y Carlos Wesley, fundadores de

“
**HOLINESS IS NOT ABOUT WHAT WE DON'T DO;
 IT IS ABOUT BEING FULLY FREE TO *love*—FREE
 TO *go*, FREE TO *serve*, AND FREE TO BE *sent*
 FOR THE SAKE OF OTHERS.”**

ensure the Holy Spirit's power could flow through them.

Holiness is **empowerment**. It's removing all barriers so God's Spirit can work through us wherever we go. The “sin that so easily entangles” (Heb. 12:1) keeps us from reaching out. When God has given us the grace to love him with all that we are, no secret sin, lie, bitterness or other barrier keeps us from being obedient. Sin no longer taints how we see our world. We can be sent to care for others and reach the lost because we love the way God does.

For centuries, the Jewish people had turned God's command “be holy for I am holy” into a series of rules to be followed and an excuse to stay as separate as possible from others. Their holiness pursuit created division and judgment and was used as a badge of honor and a weapon against others. For Christians today, when we lose our focus on being a sent people, we can easily slip into a similar pattern.

Jesus' prayer that God sanctify his

followers established a new pattern in the minds of his Jewish disciples as they listened to him speak. Jesus was making the connection that holiness was about staying WITH people and BEING among others out of love for them. Jesus was known to touch, listen and be with all sorts of people whom others wouldn't dare to be with — and Jesus prayed his friends would do the same.

As Wesleyans, our holiness theology is why we've been known for our engagement in the world. God's salvation can fully transform our lives, and our love for God and others sends us into the world. That might involve foster care, adoption care, immigration ministries, Hephzibah62:4, Global Partners, human trafficking awareness, World Hope, local church involvement and an endless list of possibilities. It's also why we must continue to pray similar prayers as John Wesley's covenant prayer, which includes the words “Put me to what you

will, place me with whom you will.” It can be too easy to use holiness as an excuse to isolate ourselves. The other temptation can be to live as one sent but try to skip the holiness part. Without **God's empowerment** through holiness, we're in danger of running out of steam, falling prey to the lies of Satan or a host of other distractions.

May our prayer as Wesleyans continue in the spirit of Jesus: “God, sanctify us so we may be **empowered and sent out** — unburdened by sins and fully free to love you and others.” 🌸



CARLA WORKING

is an ordained Wesleyan elder and the director of Clergy Development for Education and Clergy Development of The Wesleyan Church.

nuestra tradición, enfatizaron que la santidad debía ser social, vivida en comunidad y expresada entre otros.

Jesús no quería que Sus discípulos fueran santificados para que fueran aceptados más fácilmente al proclamar el evangelio. Tampoco era para hacerlos más agradables. Ciertamente no era para proveer riqueza o prosperidad. La santificación de los discípulos tenía como propósito asegurar que el poder del Espíritu Santo pudiera fluir a través de ellos.

La santidad es **empoderamiento**. Es eliminar todas las barreras para que el Espíritu de Dios pueda obrar a través de nosotros dondequiera que vayamos. El “pecado que tan fácilmente nos enreda” (Heb. 12:1) nos impide acercarnos a otros. Cuando Dios nos ha dado la gracia de amarlo con todo lo que somos, ningún pecado oculto, mentira, amargura u otra barrera nos impide obedecer. El pecado ya no distorsiona la manera en que vemos nuestro mundo. Podemos ser enviados a cuidar de otros y alcanzar a los perdidos porque amamos como Dios ama.

Durante siglos, el pueblo judío convirtió el mandato de Dios “sean

santos porque yo soy santo” en una serie de reglas que debían cumplirse y en una excusa para mantenerse lo más separados posible de los demás. Su búsqueda de santidad creó división y juicio, y se utilizó como una insignia de honor y un arma contra otros. Para los cristianos de hoy, cuando perdemos el enfoque de ser un pueblo enviado, podemos caer fácilmente en un patrón similar.

La oración de Jesús para que Dios santificara a Sus seguidores estableció un nuevo patrón en la mente de Sus discípulos judíos mientras lo escuchaban hablar. Jesús estaba estableciendo la conexión de que la santidad tiene que ver con PERMANECER con las personas y ESTAR entre otros por amor a ellos. Jesús era conocido por tocar, escuchar y estar con todo tipo de personas con quienes otros no se atreverían a relacionarse, y Jesús oró para que Sus amigos hicieran lo mismo.

Como wesleyanos, nuestra teología de la santidad es la razón por la que se nos ha conocido por nuestro compromiso con el mundo. La salvación de Dios puede transformar completamente nuestras vidas, por lo tanto,

nuestro amor por Dios y los demás nos envía al mundo. Esto puede incluir el cuidado de niños en hogares temporales, el cuidado de la creación, ministerios de inmigración, *Hephzibah62:4*, *Global Partners*, concientización sobre la trata de personas, *World Hope*, participación en la iglesia local y una lista interminable de posibilidades. También es la razón por la que debemos continuar orando similar a la oración del pacto de Juan Wesley, que incluye las palabras: “Ponme a hacer lo que quieras, colócame con quien quieras”. Puede ser muy fácil usar la santidad como excusa para aislarnos. La otra tentación es vivir como enviados, pero tratar de saltarnos la parte de la santidad. Sin el **empoderamiento de Dios** a través de la santidad, corremos el peligro de quedarnos sin fuerzas, caer en las mentiras de Satanás o sucumbir a muchas otras distracciones.

Que nuestra oración como wesleyanos continúe en el espíritu de Jesús: “Dios, santifícanos para que seamos **empoderados y enviados**, libres de la carga del pecado y completamente libres para amarte a Ti y a los demás”. 🌸

“
**LA SANTIDAD NO SE TRATA DE LO QUE NO HACEMOS;
 SE TRATA DE SER COMPLETAMENTE LIBRES PARA *amar*:
 LIBRES PARA *ir*, LIBRES PARA *servir* y LIBRES PARA SER
enviados POR EL BIEN DE LOS DEMÁS”.**

Empowered to *live sent*

Pray for our missionaries serving around the world. **Pray** for the endurance needed to run the race well, as they're experiencing a lot of unique challenges and heaviness that come with living and ministering cross-culturally.

3 BILLION
4 IN 10 PEOPLE IN THE WORLD WHO LIVE WITHOUT ACCESS TO THE GOSPEL.

73%
OF WESLEYAN MEMBERS LIVE OUTSIDE OF THE U.S. AND CANADA

Pray that the global Wesleyan Church would continue to pursue deeper unity and cross-cultural partnerships, as we set out to spread the gospel from everywhere to everywhere — together.

Pray for the 4 in 10 people who live without access to the gospel. Pray that their hearts would be softened and their eyes would be opened, through visions, dreams, conversations and friendships.

101
COUNTRIES WITH WESLEYAN MINISTRY

+15k
15,810 BAPTISMS IN 2025

Pray for a new inbreaking of the kingdom in our places of influence and through our churches as they seek to multiply, revitalize and plant churches in every zip code.

Empowered to *make disciples*

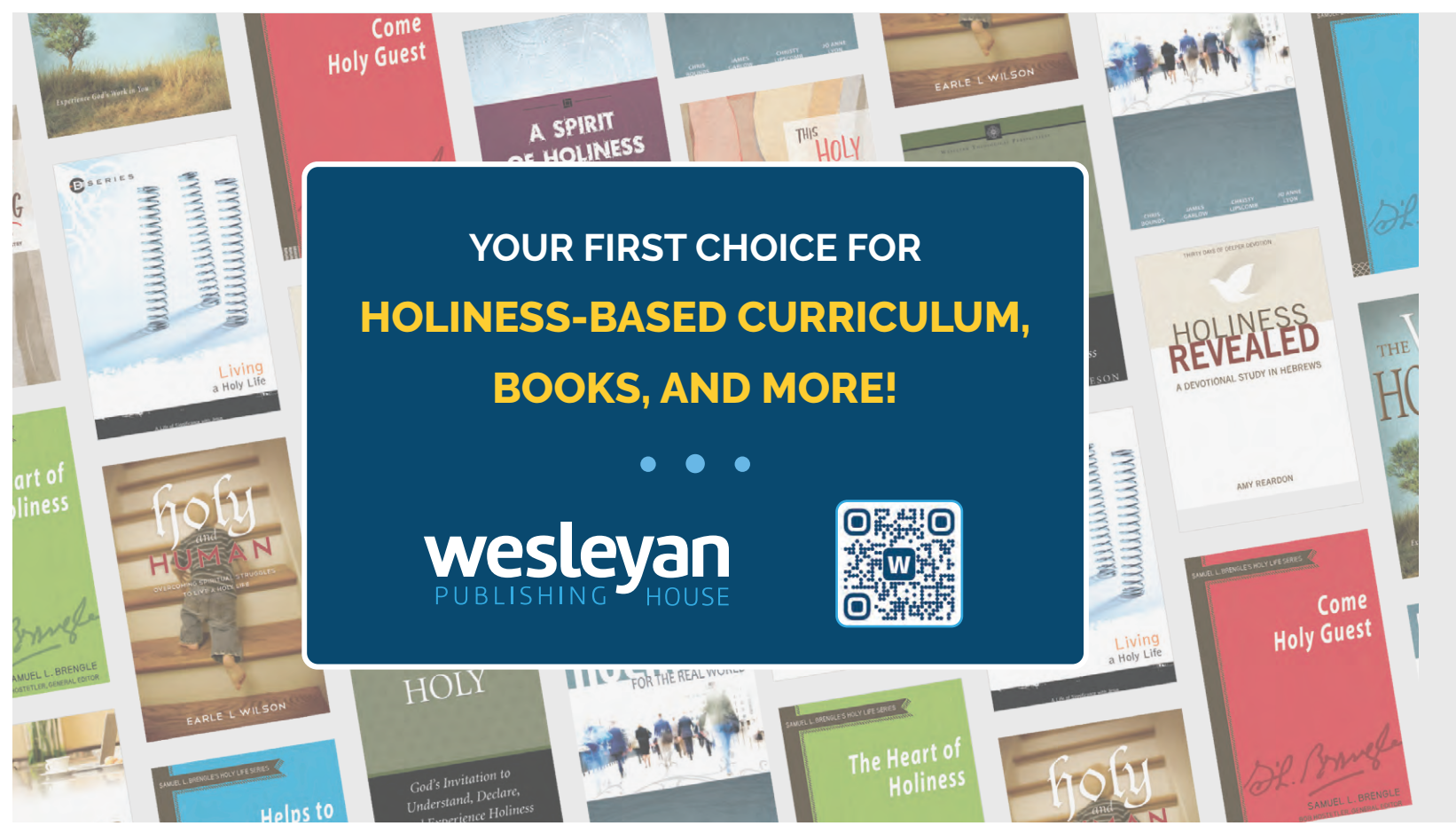
69
CHURCH REVITALIZATION PROJECTS

417
CHURCH PLANTS

Pray that The Wesleyan Church vision of transforming lives, churches and communities through the hope and holiness of Jesus Christ explodes in exponential growth — salvations, sanctifications and baptisms — in the next quadrennium.

Pray for The Wesleyan Church to be a movement — “unleashed everywhere to everywhere.”

26
CHURCH REPLANTS



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2 Timothy 1:7

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The first church nearly died in committee. Maybe that's an overstatement, but perhaps not by much. Acts 15 describes a business meeting that could have strangled the Christian movement in its infancy. Gentiles were coming to faith through Paul's and Barnabas' ministry, but teachers from Jerusalem insisted these new believers must be circumcised and follow the Mosaic law to be saved. The conflict was sharp enough that the Antioch church sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to sort it out with the apostles and elders. What happened next is one of the most consequential moments in church history and offers something vital for how we think about the Spirit's work in gathered bodies of believers. The Jerusalem Council didn't resolve quickly or easily. Luke tells

us there was "much debate" before Peter stood to speak. The apostles heard testimony from Peter about Cornelius, from Paul and Barnabas about what God was doing among the Gentiles. James consulted the prophet Amos. They wrestled with Scripture, with experience, with each other.

“
*IT SEEMED
good TO THE
HOLY SPIRIT AND
TO US ...*”

Then came the breakthrough. The Council reached a conclusion they articulated in this remarkable language: "It

seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us ..." (Acts 15:28). That phrase deserves our attention. The apostles didn't claim the Spirit bypassed their deliberation. They didn't say the Spirit handed them the decision. They didn't say they took roll call, held a vote and the Holy Spirit rubber-stamped it. Transformation came *through* their honest wrestling, their testimony, their scriptural reflection, their debate. The Holy Spirit worked in the business not around it. Wesley noted this in his commentary on Acts 15, observing that "we need not suppose their inspiration was always so instantaneous and express, as to supersede any deliberation in their own minds, or any consultation with each other." The result was organizational clarity that released the church for

mission. The door to the Gentiles was opened wide. Paul's subsequent journeys, the spread of the gospel across the Mediterranean, the eventual emergence of a global church ... all of it flows through that opened door. Each of us reading this article is downstream of what happened when that Council engaged in holy, Spirit-infused debate together.

We talk often about the Spirit's empowering work in individual believers. We preach sanctification as God's transforming grace in our personal lives. Acts 15 shows us something we discuss less frequently: the Spirit *sanctifying and empowering* the corporate body.

Consider what happened to the church as an organization at Jerusalem. It was cleansed from a false requirement that would have strangled the gospel. It was set

free from a burden that hindered mission. It was empowered to move into territory it couldn't have entered otherwise. That's sanctification language applied to a body, not just a person.

The Spirit's work at Jerusalem wasn't merely informational, telling them what to believe. It was transformational, making them into a body capable of a mission they couldn't have undertaken in their previous state of confusion. The Council that gathered in uncertainty left with clarity, power and a renewed focus on the Savior's great mission — to reach the ends of the earth.

Notice this, as well: the way the Jerusalem Council delegates approached their work seems essential to the outcome. They came to Jerusalem not having already decided their opinions

on the matter. They came with genuine questions, genuine conflict and genuine desire to allow the Spirit to lead them somewhere they couldn't have reached relying on their own human preferences, opinions and understandings.

This posture differs from arriving with entrenched positions and debating until one side "wins." It differs from treating deliberation as a "necessary evil" we must endure. The Council at Jerusalem was open to listen and be led, corrected and surprised by one another and by the Spirit.

Notice too what's absent from the account. No one attacks Peter's character for eating with Gentiles. No one accuses Paul of selling out the faith. No one suggests the Jerusalem leaders are motivated by pride or power. The debate is vigorous, but it stays focused on the

“
THE EARLY CHURCH *discovered* THAT FAITHFUL
CORPORATE DISCERNMENT, *rooted* IN SCRIPTURE
AND OPEN TO THE SPIRIT, *released* THEM FOR
MISSION THAT *bore* FRUIT FOR MILLENNIA.”

question rather than the questioners.

When a body of believers gathers with that kind of openness, something becomes possible that wasn't there before. New doors can be opened. Christ's great mission advances. The harvest field opens in new spaces.

The Wesleyan Church gathers periodically to seek the Spirit together in district and general church conferences. We deliberate, debate, hear testimony of what God is doing, consult Scripture and attempt to discern the Spirit's leading for our denomination.

But Acts 15 shows us these

gatherings can be more than business meetings. They are occasions for *corporate sanctification and empowerment through the business*. When we genuinely seek to wrestle through weighty matters while also listening to the Spirit's voice together, we position ourselves to receive clarity and power we could never manufacture on our own.

The question for any such gathering is whether we come seeking to be transformed as a body, or merely to defend our positions and conduct our business. The early church discovered that faithful

corporate discernment, rooted in Scripture and open to the Spirit, released them for mission that bore fruit for millennia.

We are that fruit. What doors might open for the message of salvation and holy transformation if we come seeking the Spirit together with the same posture? 🌱



MATTHEW TIETJE

is an ordained Wesleyan elder and serves as director in Communication and Administration of The Wesleyan Church.

“
ACTS 15 SHOWS US SOMETHING WE DISCUSS
LESS FREQUENTLY: THE SPIRIT *sanctifying* AND
empowering THE CORPORATE BODY.”

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Discover the different types of Global Marketplace Multipliers and see where you might fit. gponline.org/gmm



Story

Empowered
as *one body*

22

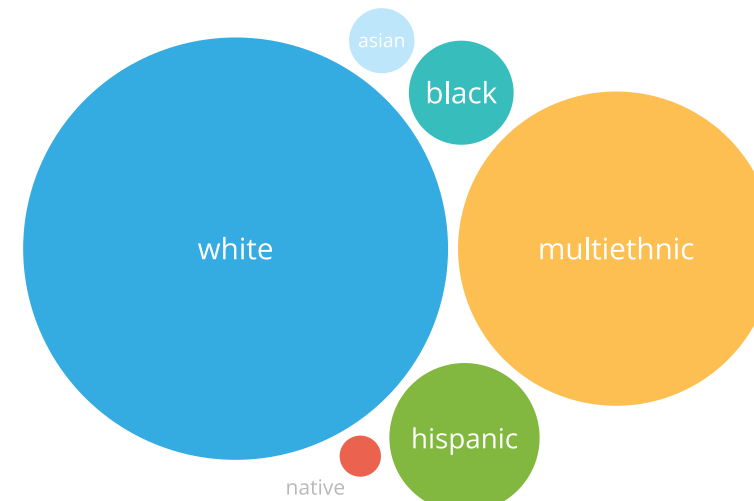
DISTRICT
SUPERINTENDENTS

30

ASSISTANT DISTRICT
SUPERINTENDENTS

29

DISTRICT
ADMINISTRATORS



WHITE 57%

ASIAN 1.33%

BLACK 3.40%

HISPANIC 7.0%

NATIVE 0.53%

MULTIETHNIC 30.87%

Pray that Wesleyan churches, districts and headquarters are empowered, emboldened and given a renewed vision to be witnesses of hope and holiness of Christ today.

6

ETHNICITIES
American Indiana or Alaska Native, African American/Black, Asian, Hispanic or Latino/a, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander

8

LANGUAGES
English, French, Haitian Creole, Kinyarwanda, Korean, Mandarin, Spanish, Swahili

Pray for a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit's power across The Wesleyan Church.

456

ORDINATIONS IN THE
LAST QUADRENNIUM

291

MEN
ORDINATIONS

Pray for the women and men who are discerning and living into the call to ministry.

165

WOMEN
ORDINATIONS

Pray for Wesleyan educational institutions as they seek to nurture, equip and prepare each student to lean into being a transforming presence for Christ.

42

AVERAGE AGE
OF NEW PASTORS

Remembered

“Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.” (Hebrews 13:7)

REV. ERNEST RAY BATMAN (98) died February 6, 2026. He pastored in Indiana and served as district superintendent of the Indiana Central District (now Crossroads).

REV. WILBERT BERTRIM died December 10. He pastored in the Central Canada District.

REV. JAMES A. BLAINE (96) died October 18. He pastored in the Penn York District.

REV. DARRELL LEE BOWDEN (79) died September 5. He pastored in Indiana and West Virginia.

REV. LAWRENCE DENNIS BURKE (73) died November 25. He was a missionary in Honduras and pastored in Alabama, South Carolina and New York.

REV. SAMUEL BUTLER (88) died August 6. He pastored in the Penn York District.

REV. SAMUEL EDGAR CONDON (92) died December 30. He pastored in the Kentucky-Tennessee District.

REV. RICHARD DEISLER (99) died October 27. He pastored in Indiana and Michigan.

REV. DAVID FISHER (95) died September 1. He pastored in the Greater Ohio District.

REV. ELDON E. FRY (79) died January 4, 2026. He pastored in the Mountain Plains District.

REV. IRA CALVIN GARDNER, JR. (76) died August 13. He pastored in the Kentucky-Tennessee District.

REV. DR. GERALD ISADORE YELLOWHAWK (89) died January 13, 2026. He pastored and served as district superintendent of the former Wesleyan Native American District.

REV. CAROL LEE JOHNSON (80) died August 3. She pastored in the Indiana South District.

REV. LAWRENCE LOWELL KEESOR (96) died October 22. He pastored in Florida and Michigan and served as the district superintendent of the former North Michigan District (now Great Lakes Region).

REV. DAVID LIVINGSTONE KEITH (95) died July 26. He served The Wesleyan Church as a missionary to South Africa, general secretary of Youth, general secretary of Local Church Education and district superintendent for the former Capital District and current Chesapeake District.

REV. WILLIAM F. KINNAN (95) died September 10. He pastored in Indiana, Michigan and Pennsylvania and served as district superintendent for the former East Michigan District (now Great Lakes Region).



MARY ELOISE OSBORNE (100) died May 23. She was a medical missionary serving with Wesleyan Missions (now Global Partners) in Petit Goave, Haiti.

REV. RONALD SYTSMA (84) died July 29. He pastored in the Great Lakes Region.

REV. DARRELL WAGNER (95) died January 29, 2026. He pastored in South Dakota and Wyoming.

REV. ROBERT WELKER (80) died October 9. He pastored in Kentucky and the Great Lakes Region.

PASTOR STEVE WILLIAMS died October 2. He pastored in the North Carolina West District.

VISIT [WESLEYAN.ORG/REMEMBERED](https://www.wesleyan.org/remembered) TO READ A FULL LIST OF OBITUARIES.

GENERAL BOARD GATHERS FOR 15TH SESSION

General Board dives into first steps of the 15th General Conference business preparation this November.

FULL STORY
wes.life/15thGB



News



GLOBAL



GENERAL



COLLEGE



“But God ...”:
A second Advent edition

FULL STORY
wes.life/BGadvent



“But God ...”:
The gift to the magi

FULL STORY
wes.life/BGmagi



SEEKING GOD

One man’s transformative, prayerful journey from Islam to serving “the God that served me” first.

FULL STORY
wes.life/seeking



WRITING A
BETTER STORY

Making choices that make a difference.

FULL STORY
wes.life/better



“But God ...”:
A light on the road

FULL STORY
wes.life/BGlight



“But God ...”: A hospital room baptism

FULL STORY
wes.life/BGbaptism



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