

The Absolute Basics of the Wesleyan Way – Chapter 12

1. Charles Wesley died in 1788, brother John in 1791. All their lives they had remained within the Church of England. But things were changing.
 - a. How did the American Revolution change the trajectory of Methodism in America?
 - b. Since the beginning of the church in America, Methodism has mirrored American culture. The church was birthed in 1784, between the end of the Revolution and the ratification of the Constitution. We divided over slavery in 1844, 17 years before the country as a whole did so. In what ways do you see the Methodist church going along with American culture today? In what ways do you see our denomination being counter cultural? The more important question, where are we being pushed to change our ways by the Gospel?
2. In the beginning, Methodists were highly adaptable. Wesley took up field preaching. They organized Class and Band meetings. In America Circuit Riders travelled incessantly to spread the Gospel.
 - a. What are some of the ways we can change and adapt today to reach more people for Jesus?
 - b. What are some of the forces that keep us from changing to keep up with God's mission? How can we overcome them?
 - c. How are you personally being led to change and take up Jesus' call on your life?
3. After Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, the disciples expected Jesus to *finally* get to what they'd waited for all along – the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel. Instead (Acts 2), Jesus sent the Holy Spirit.
 - a. What does Jesus tell the disciples to do in Acts 1:8? What did they do in response? How can we expect to experience this truth today?
 - b. What happened on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2)?
 - c. What are the important points in Peter's message in Acts 2:22-36? What do you find surprising in this message?
 - d. How did the people respond to Peter's message (Acts 2:37-41)?
 - e. If Pentecost were to happen here and now in our setting, what might it look like? What elements sound scary? Which are exciting? What are you praying for in this regard?

4. The “Wesleyan Way” has what the authors call some “fundamental features.”
 - a. What are these “fundamental features?” How are we doing them today? Which most need recovery and revival?
 - b. What do you think of the statement from Wesley with which they close the chapter: “I am not afraid that the people called Methodist should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid, lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case, unless they hold fast both to the doctrine, spirit and discipline with which they first set out.” What do we need to do *now* to keep Wesley’s fear from being realized? What are our next steps? What role would you like to have in the revival of our movement and church?