

## The Absolute Basics of the Wesleyan Way – Chapter 2

1. The chapter begins with a snippet from a hymn Charles Wesley wrote as a celebration of his own “Aldersgate” event. It’s worth considering the hymn as a whole (It’s 363 in The United Methodist Hymnal). Consider just this fuller quotation from the fourth stanza:

Long my imprisoned spirit lay,  
Fast bound in sin and nature’s night;  
Thine eye diffused a quick’ning ray—  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
My chains fell off, my heart was free,  
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

- a. What was the problem Wesley experienced? Why was this a problem?
  - b. How is this experience of sin and its consequences like and unlike your own?
  - c. What is the “quick’ning ray” that woke him up? What experience have you had of this “quick’ning ray?” How does the experience described here allude to the story in Acts 12?
  - d. What are the consequences, in Wesley’s life and your own, of this experience?
2. What are significant features of the Moravian Christians? How were they like and unlike Wesley and his Methodists? Like and unlike our own UMC?
  3. What does it look like to gain “deeper faith?”
    - a. In Wesley’s life?
    - b. In your own life?
    - c. If this “deeper faith” is a gift of God, not something we produce for ourselves, what should we do if we want to experience it?
  4. The Moravians taught Wesley to make a connection between repentance and finding the deeper faith he sought.
    - a. What is repentance? What does it look and feel like?
    - b. What some things that make repentance difficult? Why do we resist it?

5. Reporting on his experience at the Aldersgate Street meeting, Wesley says, "I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."
  - a. From your own experience and what you've learned of Wesley so far, why do you think "feeling" language is so important here?
  - b. Wesley's use of "feeling" language is not in reference to "forming an opinion" but to personal experience. How are we doing as a church at helping people not only experience Christ in ways like this but also to learn to speak about that experience? How can we do better?
  - c. If you've had an experience like Wesley describes here, how did it come about?
6. The authors say that "Before Aldersgate, Wesley had the *form of godliness*. But at Aldersgate, he gained the power of God."
  - a. Can you put their explanation of the distinction between the "form of godliness" and the "power of god" in your own words?
  - b. Why is the "form of godliness" important? What does it look like in our church? In your life?
  - c. Why is the "power of God" important? What does it look like in our church? In your life?
  - d. What happens when we try to do the Christian life – or life as a church – without either the "form of godliness" or the "power of God/?"
7. The authors say, "Salvation is like that. It's when we finally become who we were meant to be."
  - a. How does this claim about salvation fit with what you've been taught in the past? How does it go beyond or fall short of what you've been taught?
  - b. How does this claim fit with the picture of salvation we see in Ephesians 2:1-10?
  - c. How can we improve the way we talk about salvation in light of this truth?