

Methodism 101

History

Make sure to visit the Methodist family tree at www.thearda.com

Before the Methodist family tree gets growing there is a lot of history to cover.....

- First two centuries after the death of Jesus a large Christian Diaspora forms
- In years 300 - 600 the great councils met to develop Christian message
- Two centers of Christianity formed
 - Western Center -- Rome
 - Eastern Center – Constantinople
- In 1054 – the Great Schism between East and West occurs
 - Roman Catholic (meaning “all”) establishes Western Christianity
 - Rome is the center
 - The Pope is the leader
 - Peter is the patron saint
 - one centralized government is the way of organizing
 - Eastern Orthodox (meaning “right”) establishes Eastern Christianity
 - Constantinople is the center
 - The Patriarch is the leader
 - The Apostle Paul is the patron saint
 - National government is the way of organizing
- 1534 the Church of England is established by King Henry the 8th
 - Anglican (Church of England) is the home to John Wesley the founder of Methodism
 - The Episcopal Church is the American counterpart to the Anglican Church
- John Wesley’s Father was an Anglican Priest
- John Wesley (1703 – 1791) became an Anglican Priest
 - Two formative events he talked about often:
 - At the age of seven he barely escaped a house fire
 - His heart was “strangely warmed” at a reading of Luther’s preface to the book of Romans.
- Wesley developed a relationship with a fondness for a group of Christians called the Moravians
 - These were folks who in the 1400’s left the Catholic Church to unite with the Eastern Orthodox
 - A Moravian saying that stuck with Wesley is, “In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; and in all things, love.”

- Their foci were: personal piety, lay leadership, missions, premium on salvation rather than on forms of the church (ie. Hierarchy, liturgy)
 - Many of these foci would become true for the Methodist movement as well
- Wesley's intention was to attract more people to the Anglican and to begin a spiritual renewal movement within the Anglican Church
 - He never intended to start denomination
 - He preached his adapted Moravian message in Anglican parishes as a guest preacher and soon found himself unwelcome because he was pushing the envelope a little too much and making people uncomfortable
 - He then began preaching in public places and to people who were generally looked down upon
 - He Gained strong following
- He developed and encouraged a weekly system that included:
 - daily devotion
 - weekly class meetings (essentially a small covenant group)
 - two questions dominated these weekly class meetings
 - How is it with your soul?
 - To whom have you shown grace this week?
 - weekly service to those in need
 - these groups of people became well known for their ministry to prisoners, orphans, widows and for establishing health clinics and schools where they were not these services available
 - weekly worship in an Anglican Parish
- He quickly gained quite a large group of people and the word spread so that town after town were asking for this kind of ministry
 - His leadership was comprised of a few other rogue clergymen and a large group of Laity
- Methodism got it start in the US in the 1750's
 - A couple of his leaders from England came to the new world
 - They began doing the same type of ministry
 - They quickly grew in numbers and needed more clergy
 - They asked John for the permission to ordain clergy
 - He said no
 - They did it anyways and therein a denomination of born
 - The clergy were known as Circuit Riders for a long time
 - This form of ministry necessitated good lay leadership
- 1968 – Methodist Church, Evangelical United Brethren Church

Methodism 101 Theology

Two questions every Methodist should learn how to answer well.....

Why are you a United Methodist?

What does a United Methodist believe or how is it set apart from other Christian churches?

The one word I need to understand as a United Methodist: _____

1. Two theologies of life

Predestination

Free will

2. Three stages of grace:

P _____ --

J _____ --

S _____ --

3. Wesleyan Quadrilateral

Bible

History

Experience

Reason

4. Personal Piety v. Social Holiness

Methodism 101

Polity/Governance

Governance – representative democracy

Think US government

Structure – Episcopal

Versus congregational

Effects of Episcopal –

1. connectional church (UMCOR, Board of Missions)
2. We are a bureaucracy
3. Apportionments
4. Itinerant System for preachers (annual appointment)
 - a. vigor of leadership
 - b. prophetic leadership
 - c. equipping the saints

Predicting the future....

Challenges of being the only global democratic denomination
Growing people groups versus shrinking people groups
Divide or nationalize

Born in a Christian century and survive in post Christian world