

What does it mean to be a Wesleyan Christian?

Introduction

If we are to remain true to our identity and theology we need to understand what makes Methodists different from the other denominations.

It is also worth mentioning that Methodist teaching is generally located within the larger teaching of the Protestants and greatly shaped by the Anglican emphasis.

Having said that, all good Methodists would know that Methodism was greatly influenced and shaped by the Wesley's with John having a more prominent role

So being Wesleyan Christians or Methodists simply means that we have something from the life and teaching of Wesley to offer to the world.

The Wesleyan Missionary Imperatives

The Warmed Heart As A Mission Imperative

*"In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while the leader was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in 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"* (from The Journal of John Wesley, May 24, 1738).

Wesley's Mind As A Missionary Imperative

During the confusion about faith and reason Wesley made his stance very clear and believed that reason is logical, a God given faculty to enable us to search scriptures and make moral judgement as we seek true religion

Wesley's Hands As A Missionary Imperative

Wesley used theological ethics as opposed to normative ethics; he believed that faith governs behaviour rather than rules and regulations

Wesley was personally attached to the poor; which means that he had relationships that benefited the poor

Wesley's Economic Ethic

in the life of faith the stakes are always high it is either losing your soul or gaining the kingdom of God"

"wealth has the tendency not only to destroy humility and patience, but also to produce vices"

"the love of money, we know, is the root of all evil; but not the thing itself

Three Rules about Wealth

Earn as much as you can

Save as much as you can

Give as much as you can

To summarise Wesley's economic teaching we can therefore conclude that for Mr. Wesley our usage of wealth and attitude towards wealth is an expression of our relationship with (God) and our understanding of God

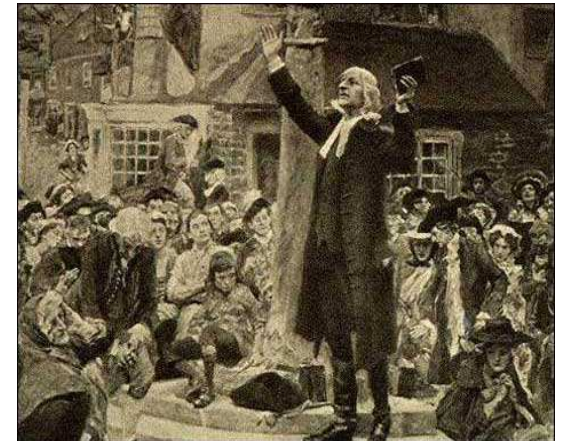


The Methodist Church of Southern Africa

A Christ healed Africa for the healing of nations

**Pretoria City Mission
Wesley Society**

Methodist Doctrine



John Wesley preaching at Epworth market

Evangelism & Church Growth Pillar

METHODIST DOCTRINE

DEFINITION OF DOCTRINE

Doctrine is:

- What is held as true
- What is accepted/ believed and taught
- Principles believed and taught

INTRODUCTION

History (how was Methodism started)

The founders of Methodism were the Wesley brother John and Charles.

John Wesley born 17 June 1703- 02 March 1791
Both Anglican priests educated at Oxford University.
While at university they met as a small group to study the bible, pray, help the poor and visit prisoners. They held themselves accountable to each other and to God and practiced discipline.

THE NAME

Other students gave them names to tease and ridicule them. They were called:

Biblemoths
The Holy Club
The Methodists
Enthusiasts

"The Methodists" became the honoured name of the movement they led.

Conversion

The event celebrated as the foundation of Methodism is John Wesley's conversion i.e. 24th May 1738. (Aldersgate)

" I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation. I felt that Jesus died for my sins and I have been pardoned and saved from the law of sin and death".

It is this experience that changed John into an inspired leader of the Evangelical Revival

What the Methodist church is for?

Wesley's words :

" Methodism was raised up by God to spread scriptural holiness throughout the land"

"Holiness" understood as two-fold process i.e. -inner holiness- devotion to Jesus and openness to the influence of the Holy Spirit
- outer holiness- love for all God's creatures i.e. working for social, economic and political justice.

What Methodists believe

Doctrines shared with all other Christians:

God, the Father, Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth
Jesus the Son of God, who revealed the love of God- who died on our behalf, resurrected, and ascended into heaven.

The Holy Spirit- God at work within and with believers (the church).

Specific Methodist Doctrine

All people need to be saved

Sin infected all humanity. All human beings are born with a tendency to rebel against God's will. (Original Sin)

All people therefore, need to be forgiven, healed and restored to fellowship with God and each other.
(Salvation a need for all

All people can be saved

Human beings are all equally the objects of God's love.
No one is beyond the reach of God's saving grace through Jesus Christ

By faith all people can access salvation which is a gift of God through Christ who justifies humanity.

(Ezek. 18:32, 2Peter 3:9 & Eph 2: 8-9)
(Salvation by Faith

All people can know they are saved.

At opening our hearts to Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit confirms within us that we are God's children.

The Holy Spirit gives one the feeling of being at peace with God- (sins forgiven and reconciled with God)

This knowledge, Assurance happens at Conversion/ New Birth which can be an instant event or a gradual process. (Rom 8:16)

All people can be saved to the uttermost

The goal of the Christian is to grow to maturity which is Christlikeness.(scriptural holiness)

Being saved to the uttermost is a process worked in all who believe by the Holy Spirit to produce Christlike character in them.

This is the ideal Methodists pray for- the goal that they depend on Christ for as they know that no one is ever free from temptation to sin.
(Christian Perfection- Sanctification

Methodist essentials

To proclaim Christ who is the love of God for the world. (not just for Christians)

To declare the fullness of the saving grace FOR ALL
To proclaim and manifest holiness.

To live simple and just lifestyle- with focus on mission to the poor.

Building of Christian community – care and growing of individual Christians in groups.

What have we become?

The doctrines and essentials above define what each Methodist church should teach, preach and practice where ever it is.

They dictate what each member of the Methodist Church should know and practice.

(Group discussions)

How true are we to Methodism ?