

What it Means to be Wesleyan

What's a Wesleyan? Protestant—Methodist—Fundamentalist – Evangelical – Charismatic – Holiness?

I. Wesleyans give top priority to salvation

"You have nothing to do but save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work."

Can't we find a better word? Why would we? Paul liked it ("By grace you have been saved"). Jesus liked it. ("The Son of Man has come to seek and to save."). God liked it. ("You will call his name Jesus because he will save his people.")

It isn't the word--- It is what we have done to it. So let's keep the word and give it back its Biblical meaning. Let's redeem the word.

II. Wesleyans have "big picture" salvation

"Salvation is the entire work of God from the first dawning of conscience in the soul, till it is consummated in glory."

- Not just saving individual souls from hell
 - Not just a sinner's prayer – not "been there, done that" conversion... not "saved, sanctified and auto-pilot."
 - It is a life of pursuing the very image of Christ
 - It is "saved" and "still being saved."
- It means
 - Lives and families that are transformed
 - Congregations that are changed into ministry centers for evangelism and discipleship
- Neighborhoods that are being impacted by acts of mercy and Christians who are salt and light in their communities
- Nations that are turned to the justice and righteousness
- The kingdom of God breaking into our present history.

III. Wesleyans Can Be Unconventional in Order to Get the Task Done
The World is My Parish

- Create changeable structures –like what we are doing at General Conference
- Involve lay persons in ministry – rather than just paid staff
- Welcome women as equals – restore the heritage of our past
- Make diversity a goal

IV. Wesleyans are Optimistic About the Possibilities of Grace
The kingdom of God is ... a society which is to subsist first here on earth and afterwards with God in glory.

- We must reject “Titanic Mindset” – Lifeboat Theology
 1. The ship (society) is going down.
 2. There is nothing Christians to do to keep it from sinking.
 3. We must “rescue the perishing” and save them.
 4. We must get them in our lifeboats (our churches) and wait until Jesus comes and takes us the heavenly shore.
 5. The ship is doomed; watch it go down.
- We must affirm the Wesleyan response
 - 1) Yes, the ship is going badly damaged.
 - 2) But God calls us to save both the passengers AND the ship (society).
 - 3) We can bring the damaged ship into the harbor with the “Captain’s” help.
 - 4) God wants us to be about his mission to save the WORLD.

What does it mean to be a Wesleyan?

- In the individual: deliverance from sin
 - Outward acts and inward “bent to sinning”
- In the world:
 - We must change persons and structures
 - We can advance the kingdom of God on earth

“Thy kingdom come on earth, as it is in heaven.”