

THE WATERCOURSE

FLUME - Florida United Methodist Evangelicals in the Wesleyan Orthodox Tradition

2014 – Quarter 4 Edition



SOAP and God's Grace - Rev. Mason Dorsey

"Therefore, having nothing — neither righteousness nor works — to plead, our mouths are utterly stopped before God. If, then, we find favor with God, it is "grace upon grace!" "By grace you have been saved through faith."" John Wesley's sermon "Salvation by Faith" as it appeared on the website methodistthinker.com 01/03/11

Do you wish you could experience more of God's grace? Do you ever feel so overwhelmed that you just wish God would send an extra touch of His grace upon you? Do you feel so blah that you wonder if this is all there is? Or do you hunger for God so much that you just want more and more of His grace?

No matter which of these you are feeling, I hope my next words are reassuring. You can't get more of God's grace. Grace is as infinite as is the God of all grace and glory. Grace is as present as the God who is omnipresent. Grace is as close as the God who sent His Son to dwell in human flesh. Grace is as alive as the God whose Spirit moves on our hearts, stirring us to guide us into all truth.

Though we can't experience more grace, we can experience grace more. (Thanks for the latitude to split a hair to make a point.) We can experience God's grace upon God's grace more and more. We can open ourselves up to the grace that is already present in infinite quantities and ready to flood into our lives daily.

One of the best channels of God's grace is daily reading and reflecting on Scripture. For Wesley, in his sermon "Means of Grace", reading and meditating and reflecting on Scripture was second only to prayer for experiencing God's grace. Do you get why I'm splitting the hair of experiencing more grace and experiencing grace more? We don't need more words, verses, pages, chapters, books of the Bible to experience God's grace more. We need to experience God's grace already given in the Bible more.

And the beauty of doing so is that the experience of grace through the Bible keeps moving us deeper into the grace of God that is already present and infinite. And so we experience grace more.

For me, one of the things I am most glad that I have learned is Wayne Cordeiro's "SOAP" method for reading and reflecting on the Bible. Back in 2001, Wayne was at Hyde Park UMC in Tampa thanks to the generosity of the Institute of Preaching. He shared how he has helped the churches he's led in Hawaii experience grace through Scripture every day.

As you read through a passage or chapters of the Bible, pay attention to the verse or verses that jump out at you. When you are done reading, write those down verbatim. That is the S in SOAP, Scripture. Then, Observe what's happening in the rest of the passage and chapter around those verses so you can understand them better. Then figure out how to Apply these verses to your life; how will you live them? Lastly, write a Prayer based on what God has taught you. All this takes is a Bible, a plan for reading through the Bible (find one online, use the Upper Room, or pick a book of the Bible and start there), and a basic notebook and pen.

What happens when United Methodists experience God's grace daily through reading the Bible? What happens when we encounter daily the infinite grace of God? May you experience the favor of God and grace upon grace.

Coming to Daytona area in June 2015 –Guest Dr. Wendy Deichman to speak at FLUME dinner — Learn more about Wendy at <http://united.edu/portfolio-item/wendy-deichmann>
<http://www.prweb.com/releases/2013/11/prweb11329395.htm>

Dr Tim Tennent and Rev. Harold Lewis fire up the Methodist Cross at the Methodist Men's Retreat at the Life Enrichment Center outside of Leesburg

In October, the Florida Conference United Methodist Men celebrated 66 years of bringing men to Leesburg, changing men's lives with the power of the Holy Spirit, and sending men home to their families and their churches to stand in the gap for Jesus Christ – to follow His calling to be better disciples, better husbands, better dads, better granddads, uncles, brothers, and sons.

At the weekend retreat of October 23-24-25, Dr Timothy Tennent, President of Asbury Theological Seminary, and speaker of the FLUME luncheon back in June of this year, rallied and revived the men with the history of Israel's disobedient and unholy *priests who profaned the land, saw false visions, and divined lies to God's people* (Ezekiel 22: 23-31, without one man among them *to stand in the gap before God on behalf of the land*). Because of this God poured out his indignation upon the people and the land. And He stands at the gap today and watches the wall being broken starting with the family, and as goes the family, so goes the community, the church and the country. Isaiah 10 talks about yearning for a man to stand. What kind of man is God looking for? One who is righteous, holy, sanctified and separated from the world, avoids touching what is unclean, avoids walking in the council of the ungodly, meditates day and night, a man of scripture, a man of valor, a man of sacrifice, not worrying about what anyone says to or about him, a man with the Spirit of God, cleansed on the inside, guided by the Spirit. Isaiah 6 says, "*Here I am.*" Dr Tennent listed a host of men, all having their human frailties – our prudential prototypes – Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, and Jesus, Himself, and His apostles.

Dr Tennent also lifted up the book of Judges 13, 14, and 16 – scriptures, he says, which do not necessarily represent the views of today's church. From the story of Samson and what he gave away, Dr Tennent said today's church's greatest challenge is overcoming a lack of courage. While we are witnessing a great movement of God throughout the world, the American church is showing signs of losing courage in the face the roaring lion. The church has lost its vigilance. We are forgetting who we are. The church is accepting discounts in order to achieve lesser summits. The church is growing faster than ever before in history, but not here. The last headlines the New York Times will be publishing will be "*The kingdoms of the world become the Lord's. Every knee shall bow.*"

For those of who hold dear the entire Word of God, Dr Tennent calls on us "*Do not lose our vigilance. God has great plans.*" In other words, we haven't seen anything yet.

In preaching about Gideon, Rev Harold Lewis says "*God doesn't call men who are qualified. God qualifies the men He calls.*" God challenged Gideon in Judges 6 & 7 to reduce the size of his army in the face of his enemies. God had in mind that He Himself wanted to be glorified in victory. Lewis says the "*the problem is not our inadequacies, the problem is our iniquities, our sins which cut us off from God.*" "*We don't choose our calling. God's calling chooses us.*" "*How many are ashamed of their relationship with Jesus Christ? God has no secret service ministry. We must stand in the gap – for God, for our families, our schools, and our churches, where we work, and where we live.*"

"FLUME, as an orthodox evangelical network, can serve as a watercourse with the help of the Holy Spirit to funnel the transforming waters of the evangelical heritage and Wesleyan traditions of The United Methodist Church throughout the churches and congregations of the Florida Conference."

Welcome to the Florida United Methodist Evangelicals!

Please check out our website at www.flumeevangelicals.com.

We are a group of faithful United Methodists who deeply love our churches and our Florida Annual Conference. What can we do to better prepare for the future? How as evangelical Christians can we become more and more Christ-like in our behavior and in our mission, as well as bringing new souls to Christ? Many people of different political, philosophical and theological traditions also care greatly about our church. How can we best respond in holiness to the various questions, issues and controversies facing our church today? What would you like to see in our newsletters and on our website? Share your thoughts with us by emailing us at info@flumeevangelicals.com. We would like to plan events to get together, fellowship, and listen to each other and exciting speakers on the issues facing our church today. What type of format would you like to see in such an event? When and where would be a good

FLUME Steering Committee

Rev. Mason Dorsey – St Petersburg masondorsey@hotmail.com

Rev. Guy Weatherly weatherlyguylyn@aol.com

Rodney Akers - Brandon Rodney.akers2@gte.net

Bill Clark - Spring Hill tampaclarks@hotmail.com

Russ Graves – Melbourne russgraves@cfl.rr.com

Dottie Graves – Melbourne dotnruss@gmail.com

Rod Groom – Ft Pierce rod.groom@gmail.com

Chet Klinger - Largo cklinger1@tampabay.rr.com

Other Resources for evangelical Methodists

Confessing Movement – <http://www.confessingumc.org/>

Good News Magazine – <http://goodnewsmag.org/>

Institute on Religion & Democracy -
<http://www.theird.org/page.aspx?pid=220>

Lifewatch – lifewatch@charter.net

RENEW Network – Liz Kittle - <http://www.renewnetwork.org/>

United Methodist Men Florida Conference -
<http://www.ummflconf.org>

Wesleyan Covenant Network -
<http://www.wesleyancovenantnetwork.org/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 16 – 17, 2015 **Mission Impact Conference** - Bethune-Cookman University = Target Audience: Young adults, church leaders, older adults -Proceeds: Imagine No Malaria **Purpose:** to connect with young and older adults, develop a strong legacy of missions with expanded knowledge, humility, inclusiveness, and creativity Registration: www.missionimpactflorida.org Needed: \$20 donation (\$10 per pretreated with pesticide/\$10 for event snacks, etc), volunteers, scholarships

March 6-7-8, 2015 Spiritual Retreat weekend for Couples and Singles, Men and Women – hosted by the FI Conf UMM

June 10, 2015 - **Annual FLUME Dinner** – 5:30 pm – 6:45 pm - Covenant United Methodist Church 3701 S Clyde Morris Blvd, Port Orange, FL 32129 Guest speaker: Dr. Wendy Deichmann, President – United Theological Seminary – reservations required.

For more information about these events, contact us at info@flumeevangelicals.com

For Unity, Follow Me

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(The following is taken from "Whispers of Hope" by Beth Moore.
Published by B&H Publishing Group, Nashville, TN)

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"For when one of you says, 'I am a follower of Paul,' and another says, 'I follow Apollos,' aren't you acting just like people of the world?" - 1 Corinthians 3:4 NLT

Regarding His church, nothing means more to Christ than unity; obviously Satan's priority work is division. The enemy already knows the gates of hell cannot prevail against the church, so instead he attacks from inside. Though Satan cannot overcome the church as a whole, he wreaks havoc and excludes many by cultivating division from the inside out.

If I may say so gently, it's time for the church to grow up. We desperately need to break up a few camps in Christ's church and let Him move us on to maturity. We have conservative camps, moderate camps, and liberal camps. We have camps within a camp. Our church staffs, meant to be examples of unity, are often replete with camps. Church members stand behind this minister against that minister - the division goes on and on.

Let's allow God to turn our hearts inside out. Are we in Christ's camp and His alone? Christ is the Head of the church, and we are unified only as we all bend our knees to Him.

"I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me." - John 17:23 NLT

May we be "brought to complete unity."

What is Methodist Crossroads?

Methodist Crossroads is a new movement coming from clergy and laity who met in Atlanta to urge the Methodist leadership – the Council of Bishops – to restore the integrity of Methodism's covenant and church order.

"If the Council is not able to restore unity with integrity, then we believe the healthy and mature response is to admit we are so deeply divided we are no longer one church. And the church would do well to seriously explore the option of amicable separation."

Methodist Crossroads prays for the Holy Spirit to renew a Christ-like passion within the church to reach the lost with the good news, and fire a desire for personal and social holiness.

"We understand and share the desire for unity. But the unity Jesus prayed for in John 17 had nothing to do with denominations. Unity does not mean sharing the same name but sharing the same commitments to Christ and to doing his work in the world."

Methodist Crossroads is asking Methodists who support their statement of Integrity and Unity to click on this link and stand with these believers that unity can be achieved if the Council of Bishops fulfill their responsibilities to *"teach and uphold the theological traditions of The United Methodist Church"* (BOD ¶414.5).

<http://www.methodistcrossroads.org/?p=1/#menu-integrity-unity>

Delegates to be elected at 2015 Florida Annual Conference

FLUME is looking for strong, enthusiastic, and passionate orthodox Methodists to run as candidates for the 2015 election of delegates for the General Conference and SE Jurisdictional Conference in 2016. Lay members who have been active participants in The United Methodist Church for at least 4 years preceding the election (since June 2011), and are members of a Florida Conference UM church as of February 15, 2015 are eligible. Clergy members are eligible, who are ordained ministers in full connection with the Annual Conference. Lay members who are enrolled in seminary and who have not yet been ordained are urged to avoid running for election as a lay delegate.

For help in letting us know who you think would be best to run, or whether you should run or what you must do to file all the important papers in time to become a qualified candidate, contact us info@flumevangelicals.com See also on enclosed herein the 2016 Delegate Election Process from the Florida Annual Conference.

2016 General and Jurisdictional Conference Delegate Election Process Is Now Open

The planning and preparation for the 2015 session of the Florida Annual Conference is well under way. As always, there will be plenty of business for the members to debate and decide. During the 2015 session, we will also be electing lay and clergy members to represent our Annual Conference as delegates to the 2016 General and Jurisdictional Conferences. Being elected to serve as a delegate is quite an honor that carries a lot of responsibility.

Who can be elected as a delegate of our Annual Conference? The Florida Annual Conference uses an online self-nomination process. Anyone who: (1) senses the leading of God to serve as a delegate, (2) who meets all of the Disciplinary eligibility requirements, (3) who successfully completes the self-nomination process before the February 15, 2015 deadline, or (4) who successfully completes the self-nomination process during the Lay or Clergy Sessions on the first day of Annual Conference, can have their name placed on the ballot for election at the 2015 Annual Conference Session in Daytona Beach, Florida.

How do I know if I'm being called to serve as a delegate? Let me suggest the following:

- *Begin with a time of prayer and reflection. Explore your thoughts and feelings with God. Ask God for the wisdom and understanding to know how best to serve.*
- *Take time to study the issues affecting the United Methodist Church, our Annual Conference, our congregations, and our world. What are the social, spiritual, theological and moral concerns which need to be addressed by our denomination?*
- *Ask someone whom you trust to help you to discern whether your gifts and skills, intuition and insight, learning and leadership have prepared you to serve as a delegate at this time.*
- *Reflect deeply on one of the required essay questions. As a delegate, what particular things could/would you do to help the United Methodist Church to fulfill its purpose and mission around the world?*
- *After having done all of the above, and sensing God's call to serve, place your name on the ballot by completing the self-nomination process found on the Conference web site (<http://flumc2.org/nominations>).*

The online nomination process will remain open until midnight on February 15, 2015. If you have questions about the eligibility requirements or the self-nomination process, call, write, or email me using the information below. I will assist you in every way possible. Blessings!

*Dr. Kenneth L. Minton
Conference Secretary
38635 5th Avenue*

FLUME - Florida United Methodist Evangelicals in the Wesleyan **Orthodox Tradition**

We are learning fast the words UNITED METHODIST EVANGELICALS in our name FLORIDA UNITED METHODIST EVANGELICALS by themselves can connote many types of groups within the United Methodist community – orthodox and unorthodox. The ones we would like our readers to know is that FLUME is a group of evangelicals that stand for the Wesleyan orthodox tradition of Wesley's Methodism. True to scripture and true to the teachings of grace, holy love, and salvation through repentance. This is why we changed the header in our newsletter to add the word "orthodox". Our speaker at FLUME's dinner at the Annual Conference in 2015 – Dr. Wendy Deichmann – wrote her own answers to "What's Right with Orthodoxy?" You can read her article at <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2013/11/prweb11329395.htm>

Meet the New Room Conference - Orthodox believers gathered in September near Nashville to remind us that plenty of orthodox evangelical blood still pumps through the weakened Wesleyan frame. The inaugural New Room Conference brought together around 250 pastors, most with ties to Asbury Seminary in Kentucky, the *de facto* hub of conservative or “confessing” Methodism.

<http://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2014/10/the-coming-methodist-revival>

Wesley’s early Organization for the Methodist Church – Chet Klinger

A group of sheep is called a flock. A group of geese (on the ground) is called a gaggle. A group of lions is called a pride. A group of baboons is called a congress. What would John Wesley call a group of men coming together “seeking the power of godliness.” In late 1739, John Wesley called this company of men a **society**, more specifically the **United Society**; people who were deeply concerned of their sins, people he wanted to spend some time together with in prayer and advise them how they could “flee the wrath to come.” The United Society needed to divide into **classes** each composed of twelve persons with one appointed a leader. To remain in a **class**, an aspirant had to demonstrate evidence of their desire for salvation by adhering to three general rules: (1) avoid evil; (2) do good; and (3) employ the means of grace—all this to foster repentance from an old way of life to a new one. One could advance in a Methodist **class** and assume a leadership role on the basis of faithfulness and spiritual progress, elements that were open to all, rich or poor, educated or not.

A member of a **class** had the option to participate in a **band**, a group that, with its more rigorous discipline, remained voluntary. **Bands** had no designated leaders, because it was assumed at this level of spiritual experience participants had assurance of forgiveness of sins, mutual accountability and care. Methodist **bands** and **classes** normally met separately, but came together once every quarter for a love feast. Those Methodists who walked in the light of God, who Wesley regarded earnest and mature Christians, those he could offer up as an example to others as a pattern of love, holiness, and good works, he organized into a “**select society**.” Because they were on the threshold of Christian perfection, Wesley maintained they need not be encumbered by many rules or have any stated leader. The only rules were confidentiality, obedient submission to his minister, and weekly contributions to a common stock. [This summary appears in Kenneth J Collins “The Theology of John Wesley – Holy Love and Shape of Grace. Pp 249-252]

This raises the question as to what is the group we call the **Florida United Methodist Evangelicals?** Or the Wesleyan Covenant Movement? Or the Confessing Movement? Or the Methodist Federation on Social Action? Is each a group of dedicated Christians Wesley would call a society? A class? A band? Or a select society? Would John Wesley call FLUME or the Wesleyan Covenant Movement a band of the Methodist Church? A “select society” of Christians?

Wesley’s early method-ism seems like an attempt to reverse the path the Hebrews took leading up to the time they asked their prophet and judge Samuel to get them their own king, to be like their neighbors. Before that time the Israelites were a family of parents and grandparents

communicating the will of God in a righteous community. These families made up tribes who carried the names of their patriarchs – Benjamin, Judah, Dan, Issachar, and others. They didn't have big government, like the Egyptians, Babylonians, and Assyrians. They didn't need big government. They had Yahweh as their Lord, and a few holy men or women to guide them in understanding the will of God and the desires of righteousness and righteous living. Then came judges to help lead the people – the tribes – to resolve internal matters and external matters with their enemies, with the hand of God to protect them and to do wondrous things for them. Then came the cry for big government – the young declared Samuel to be old and whose sons no longer walked in his ways. Therefore the elders wanted “change”, hope and change to accommodate the new ways of the young. They wanted their own king. God told Samuel they rejected God himself, not Samuel, that they were being lured by other gods of their day, and Samuel should heed to their voice. He commanded Samuel to warn them of what they are about to enter into with a new king – they would first lose their individual freedoms, as people, as families and as tribes. The king will take their children as unto his own to serve his purposes and to run his chariots, and plow his ground and reap his harvests, and to make his weapons to fight his wars. He will take their daughters to bring fragrance to his palaces, make them into servants, cooks, and bakers. They will be made to pay taxes to him on everything they grow and made while they still paid their own tithes and offerings to God. They refused to heed Samuel's warnings from God and went on to having their way.

The founding fathers of America understood this and tried to reverse this trend by rejecting the authority of the king of England and by establishing a Constitution attributed to our Creator and guaranteeing our freedom to worship God.

Down through history, the Hebrews, Israelites, the Jews have given over their God-given freedoms to big governments. They still do today. And Christians today who heard Jesus preach to desire less and give more and to give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's, are becoming more like the Jews, allowing big government to take care of matters for which the church has been called. It seems Wesley's ideas tried to reverse this in the days when big government, big churches, and big institutions depended more on a king or on secular humanism and less on God to ways where the church would meet the needs of poor and the governments were faithful to God rather than man. Much like what the people were warned about back in Samuel's days, Wesley warned us in his time and ours that salvation is not from our government who makes us slaves, but from us who find salvation and freedom in turning to God. Today, it seems that many descendants of the Wesleyan movement are about to give over to big government the authority to rule our lives and the kingdom of God.