

wesleyan life

THE MAGAZINE OF THE WESLEYAN CHURCH



Big HERO



The **Little**

Giant

Iglesia Cristiana Bethel Wesleyana (ICBW) of DeLand, Florida, is a very small church with a membership roster of about 35 members, and most of them only speak Spanish. At that tiny church, however, about 60 families, whose majority speaks only English, show up on a weekly basis to pick up food for their households.

When Pastor Isoniel ‘Sonny’ Melendez, a native of Puerto Rico, and his wife of 50 years, Nilda, began their ministry at ICBW in 2008, they had no idea how big of an impact they would be making in their community. With hearts focused on serving the underserved and loving the unloved, the Melendezes have sought each opportunity to reach people of all races and tongues by closing the multicultural gap. What started with a Bible study meeting on Wednesday nights soon evolved into God’s even bigger plans for ICBW.

In 2012, a local food bank recruited their help with the distribution of groceries in their neighborhood.

The small congregation with a big vision to feed people both physically and spiritually, said “yes” to the call and adopted Matthew 14 as its guiding force. In this passage, Jesus performed the miracle of feeding 5,000 people with just five loaves of bread and two fish. Shortly before the miracle took place, the disciples told Jesus to let the multitude go into the villages to buy themselves food, but he rebuked them saying, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat” (v. 16).

When the food bank closed its doors three years later, the ICBW pastors felt that they could not stop helping those in their community who had come to depend on them for food. They knew they did not have what it would take to do it alone, so they prayed and asked God to help them help those in need. They knew they were supposed to do more than just pass out bags of groceries to those who were physically hungry; they wanted to be a place where people could come and find solace during their sorrows. They trusted God and obeyed his lead.



"The small congregation with a big vision"

"We are known in the community as a church that understands pain and hurt," said Nilda Melendez, reflecting the compassion of someone who deeply cares about the spiritual well-being of those who seek the food pantry services. "At the food pantry, it is not uncommon for someone to see two people whose languages are so different embracing in silence. The tears they shed and the smiles they smile go beyond any language barrier. We don't want to just fill their bellies. We want to share the love of Jesus with them," said Nilda.

The Melendezes also alluded to God's way of answering prayer. "One day we prayed that we needed gold, and two hours later a truck pulled up and dropped off 800 pounds of Golden Nugget potatoes for our pantry. God does have a sense of humor," they said.


The food pantry opens every Thursday, from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Volunteers arrive early to sort, divide and bag the food, then pray and prepare for the public to arrive. "Those who benefit from the pantry's generosity also share their own generosity in the form of random acts of kindness," said Nilda. "The food pantry at ICBW is called Pay-It-Forward-DeLand, because the name expresses how kindness can generate more kindness, and those who come for food are encouraged to pay their kindness forward. Some of the testimonials are very touching."

One of the pantry services beneficiaries said, "I invited my neighbor to share a meal with some of the food I received."

Another said, "I was at the laundromat and noticed a homeless person who was about my size. I gave him some of my clean

clothes. I then paid a washing cycle for the clothes he took off."

Because of trust and obedience to God, the little church in DeLand has continually fed thousands of people in its area over the years and has been appointed as a distribution center for The Emergency Food Assistance Program. A partnership with Second Harvest has earned them the title of number one agency for 2018 in Volusia County.

ICBW is just like a worker ant who can carry 5,000 times more than its own weight. The little giant in DeLand, Florida, thrives in its mission to feed the hungry, in spite of its size. 

LUSKA NATALI

is an executive assistant in Education and Clergy Development at The Wesleyan Church.



With hearts focused on serving the underserved and loving the unloved, the Melendezes have sought each opportunity to *reach people* of all races and tongues by closing the **multicultural gap.**





Vision

The "MULTI" in Movement

I've been focusing prayer on The Wesleyan Church becoming a movement again.

Many prayer partners are also asking God to empower us to help close the "Gospel Gap" between a growing, changing population and those having a personal opportunity to respond to the gospel.

I love the Apostle Paul's concise and compelling description of a movement: **"So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ might be built up ..."** (Ephesians 4:11-12). An equipped Kingdom Force engaging every believer to reach every person is a movement.

Throughout this and the next three *Wesleyan Life* magazines, you'll read more about this Kingdom Force — multigenerational, multiethnic, multieconomic, women and men, lay and clergy, from everywhere to everywhere. Its origin is traced to the Day of Pentecost when all believers were empowered to be witnesses. Our Wesleyan movement was birthed in England and then North America, engaging freshly redeemed people in spreading the Word.

A true movement of God is essentially MULTI — not siloed in one segment of society or compartmentalized in a single culture.

The **gospel's impact** is pervasive as it transforms receptive lives, churches and communities.

The Good News overflows barriers that divide and limit, as Christ fulfills his purpose to **"... create in himself one new humanity ..."** (Ephesians 2:15). From its roots in Judaism, Christianity rippled to Gentiles across the Roman empire as disciples made disciples.

Disciples making disciples glorifies God and creates a bit of heaven on earth as we anticipate **"... a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb ..."** (Revelation 7:9).

Be a Kingdom Force. Make disciples. 🌿



DR. WAYNE SCHMIDT
General Superintendent
The Wesleyan Church


THE wesleyan CHURCH

Transforming lives, churches, and communities through the hope and holiness of Jesus Christ.

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Kingdom FORCE

The Wesleyan Church is praying to become a movement. It will never happen without the Holy Spirit unleashing a Kingdom Force that is multigenerational, multiethnic and multieconomic, comprised of women and men, lay and clergy, and sent from everywhere to everywhere. Prepare your hearts. Pray with expectation.



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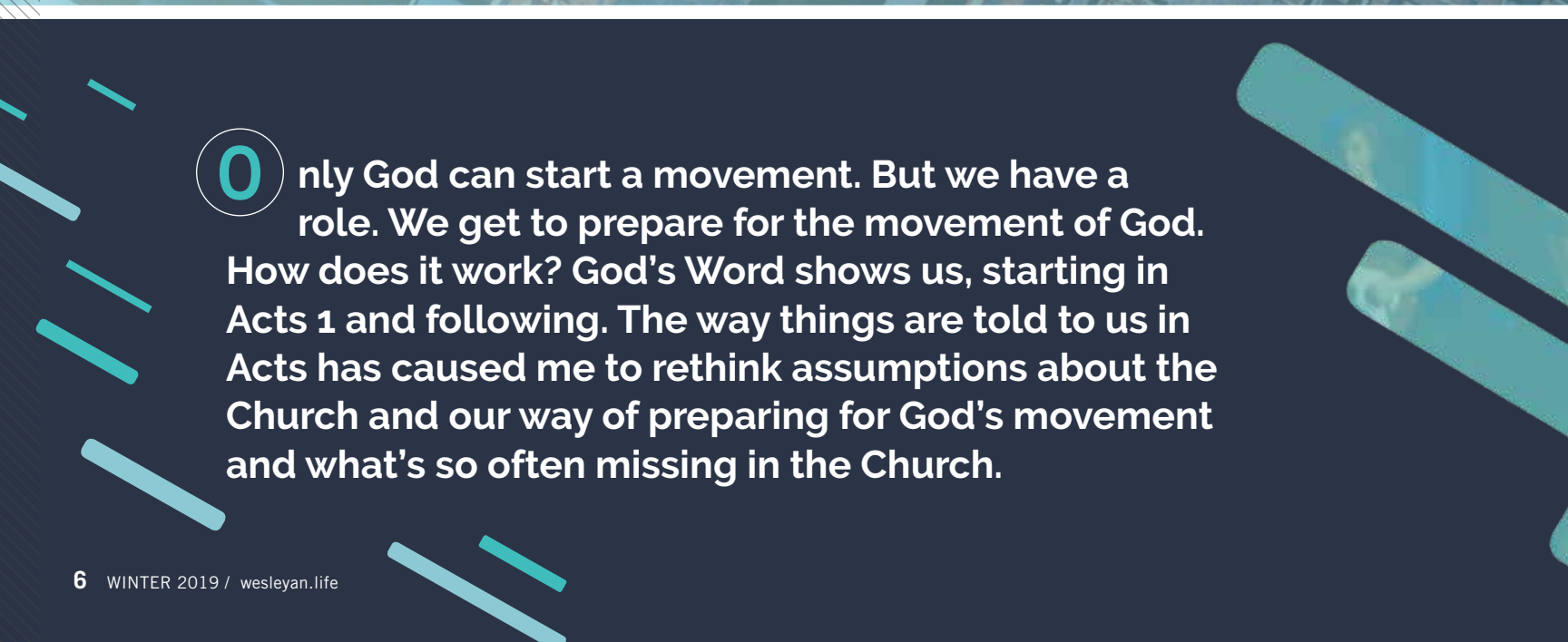
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THE FORCE BEHIND A *Movement*



Only God can start a movement. But we have a role. We get to prepare for the movement of God. How does it work? God's Word shows us, starting in Acts 1 and following. The way things are told to us in Acts has caused me to rethink assumptions about the Church and our way of preparing for God's movement and what's so often missing in the Church.



Power

Acts 1:8 promises we have access to all the power needed to fulfill God's purposes: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

I love the way Kevin Myers, senior pastor of 12Stone Church in Lawrenceville, Georgia, explains Acts 1:8, "God gives his power for his purposes. He does not give his power for my purposes. He does not expect me to fulfill his purposes in my power."

Pentecost, in Acts 2, displays God's power supernaturally impacting people gathered from all nations. Three thousand people were "cut to the heart" by Peter's message. We ask, "How do you disciple 3,000 people when there were only 120 people in the Upper Room?" The math doesn't work out on that one. There never seems to be enough in the core to disciple the entire harvest. So, like the early church, we must equip and multiply even new disciples to make disciples.

In doing so, the followers of Christ grew faster after his departure than when he was physically present, which matches his promise: "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these ..." (John 14:12).

BY WAYNE SCHMIDT

Pressure

The mirror image of Acts 1:8 found in Acts 8:1 is fascinating and convicting. "... On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered through Judea and Samaria."

Apparently, having the POWER of God isn't enough to get us to obey him. God is willing to use pressure, persecution and pain (8:1) when his power (1:8) is not enough to move us to action.

Suffering sparked the sending of the early believers. Notice that "all except the apostles" were scattered. The first apostles remained in Jerusalem. Was this because they felt safe in the familiar routines of their customs and culture, instead of going into Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth as Christ commanded? Is this true for us? We have the power of the Holy Spirit accessible to us. Is it enough to spark us to action?

ONLY GOD
CAN
START A
MOVEMENT

Prayer

Another way the apostles had to prepare for movement showed up in Peter's trance in Caesarea after the angel appeared to Cornelius in Acts 10. Peter was chiefly concerned with cleanliness and comfort. However, God shows up in his time of prayer, and Peter connects with those who will cross his path (they literally show up at his door).

This was part of a chain of experiences God used to break through Peter's ethnocentrism and Judaizer tendencies to realize "... God does not show favoritism ..." (Acts 10:14-15).

The Wesleyan Church can become a Spirit-led, prayer-fed movement. For that to happen, we must pray with an offense, not merely defense, mindset. We must pray proactively, not passively. The apostles prayed constantly, as we know from Acts 1:14: "They all joined together constantly in prayer ..." Yet even in constant prayer it took what happened in Acts 8 and 10 for God to get them to live sent. You can pray and still miss the point.

Instead, we can move beyond maintenance prayers to missional passion, seeking to take new territory and cross new boundaries on the map and in our relationships with those unlike us.

Would you dedicate the next 90 days to a Kingdom Force prayer? [Daily PRAY.](#)



We must pray with an offense, not merely defense, mindset. We must pray proactively, not passively.

God promises us the power to reach the five billion worldwide who are unable to make an informed decision about Jesus Christ. The pressure to reach them increases daily as the Gospel Gap widens, and some of that pressure may be in our own pain and persecution if we don't move with his power.

A radically obedient missional prayer is the essential next step for God to move us out of our comfort zone to close the gap.

- P** **PRAISE** God for who he actually is, the all-knowing Creator who makes claims on your life.
- R** **REPENT**, removing any barriers that keep you in your comfort zone, ignoring the lost.
- A** **ASK** God to keep you accountable to be an authentic disciple and a disciple-maker.
- Y** **YIELD** and obey to God's commands, behaving with Acts 8 and 10 in mind, not just Acts 2.

God's power is within you.

Use it. 



Big HERO

BY TRICIA RIFE



"Mom, do you have cancer?"

This was the question eight-year-old Landen Schappacher asked his mom, Cassandra Roeske (pronounced "Risky"), one day while she was driving. The words took her aback as she responded, "I don't know yet."



WATCH LANDON'S STORY

wesleyan.life/big-hero

hear **Rev. Megan Cusumano**, WW director and North Park Wesleyan assistant pastor, talk, he became curious and eventually placed his faith in Jesus in December 2015.

Landen isn't the only WW participant who has decided to follow Jesus. In Cusumano's

10 years as director, approximately 300 kids have made

a personal faith decision for Christ. Cusumano, a Cuba, New York, native, sees this as her "opportunity to give back to the community and to God."

"I have a passion to share his message with as many people as possible," she said.

Seventy percent of the children in the WW program are from single-parent homes and 90 percent of their families are not regular church attendees.

According to Cusumano, many WW kids are making radical differences in their families. They are discipleship heroes.

"Kids are bringing parents to church and not the parents bringing kids to church."

That's how it happened for Landen's family. Soon after he received Christ as Savior, he asked "Pastor Meg," as she is affectionately called, for Bibles for his mom and her boyfriend (now husband). Landen and Roeske attended church afterward but not consistently.

Then Landen decided he wanted to be baptized. Since North Park Wesleyan was hosting a baptism service on Easter Sunday that year, 2016 seemed to fit perfectly. So Roeske, Landen and her younger son, Hayden, ended up meeting with Cusumano.

No one was expecting what would



Roeske looked over at her son, his head down and hands lifted up. His lips were moving as he prayed, and his response became a pivotal moment in her life that January day in 2016, even after the tests came back negative.

The following Sunday, Roeske took her family to church at **North Park Wesleyan Church** in Cuba, New York. This was not the first time Landen had visited.

For months, Landen had been attending Wild Wednesday, a weekly, afternoon program held at North Park for elementary-aged children. New York state has a law for "religious release time education," allowing children one hour of off-site religious teaching once during the week, on school time. Buses pick up the children at school and take them to church, and once the hour is up at the church, return them to school to catch another bus or be picked up by parents.

At Wild Wednesday (WW), kids have an interactive Bible lesson that is illustrated in a messy or crafty way (such as digging through pudding to find gummy worms). They also play silly games and compete in team competitions. After a large group session, they split into teams and meet with leaders to discuss the lesson and learn how to apply it in their lives. The children also have a weekly Scripture verse to memorize.

Attending this program was Landen's first introduction to Jesus. Landen, who turns 12 in January 2019, began attending WW with a friend who invited him. At first, the attraction for Landen was that WW was "really fun." But as he continued to



In Cusumano's 10 years as director, approximately **300 kids have made a personal faith decision for Christ.**

happen that day. Cusumano shared what baptism represents, and Roeske burst into tears.

"I thought, 'My kids know about Jesus, and I want to know about him, too,'" said Roeske. She and Hayden placed their faith in Jesus that Good Friday in Cusumano's office. Two days later, Landen and Hayden were baptized. Then, weeks later, Roeske and the boys' uncle were baptized.

Now, three years later, at least 10 members of Landen's family attend North Park regularly. Nearly all have placed their faith in Christ, have been baptized and are now serving at the church. Some have also become members.

Roeske is beyond grateful for the impact Cusumano and WW have had on her sixth-grade son.

The difference Landen has made in the lives of his family members is having a **multigenerational impact.**

"Without Landen, we wouldn't be where we're at," said Roeske, who serves in the church kids' ministry and has started helping with WW.

Landen isn't done having an impact in Cuba. He still has plenty of friends whom he'd like to see come to Christ.

"I want my friends to come to Wild Wednesday with me, because I want them to have Jesus in their lives," said Landen, a kid who loves all things Buffalo Bills and dinosaurs.

Cusumano continues to encourage other kids like Landen and, more importantly, communicate who Jesus is. She believes Next Gen ministry will change the face of the church as a whole.

"Invest in [kids' ministry]," said Cusumano. "Kids are going home and changing their entire families, just like Landen did. I'm seeing God change the lives of kids of all ages."

All because of WW, a faithful Next Gen leader like Cusumano and big heroes like Landen. 🙌

JOURNEY > LEARN > ENGAGE

NEXT

EXPLORING WHO YOU ARE IN **GOD'S MISSION**

NEXT equips you for lifelong global engagement
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MONTH
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Developing Kingdom Force Leaders

Our current boxing ring culture tells everyone to go to their corners and catch their breath in order to go back out there and fight. Surely this isn't the way Jesus calls us to build the church.

NEXT inspires a culture of crossing barriers, building bridges and making disciples in humility and love. Through this mentored cross-cultural immersion experience with Global Partners, young adults will be equipped for lifelong global engagement.

All 2019 NEXT internship sites — Central Europe, Eastern Europe, Turkic-Arabic and Dearborn, Michigan — are pioneer church planting locations. Each is relationally driven and Holy Spirit led. Interns will learn from cream of the crop, experienced mentors who will guide them on an eight-week journey of self-discovery and skill development.

One site leader put it this way, "If you want to be instantly successful, do something else. If you want to be instantly useful, come here."

The Dearborn Site offers the opportunity to partner with Mosaic Midtown Church, a dynamic multiethnic church plant in the heart of Detroit, Michigan. Dearborn is an extension of the local church, but it might as well be a world away in this vastly different immigrant neighborhood. This unique context offers interns

NEXT provides an opportunity for young adults to fuel the Wesleyan movement as future Kingdom Force leaders.

Vision



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the opportunity to build relationships with unreached people groups and gain exposure to an urban context as well as cross-cultural, pioneering church planting.

Interns will be part of a team asking critical questions: What does it look like to build the church in this context? How do I build relationships with people who think and believe differently than me? What good news does this community need to hear?

Interns will develop communication skills, including language learning in the culture in which they will serve. They will build community and engage with mentors to gain clarity for their next steps. Through NEXT, they can find or fine tune their calling.

NEXT provides an opportunity for young adults to fuel the Wesleyan movement as future Kingdom Force leaders. The need for a multiethnic, multigenerational and multieconomic Kingdom Force of disciples is imperative. 🌿



DINA HORNE
is the site developer for NEXT.



UNITED IN THE LOVE OF CHRIST

We recognize that God created everyone in his image. That makes every person — every *single* person — worthy of our time, effort and attention.

Serving
in the
absence
of **ideal**

There is nothing new or profound about how we do ministry in Trinity Church/Garfield Park (TCGP), Indianapolis, Indiana. Every Thursday night when we open the door, we see Jesus in every face that has been waiting to come in out of the weather. We don't *bring* Jesus into southeast Indianapolis from the more affluent northern suburbs. We *find* Christ's presence already here in hugs and handshakes across socio-economic lines, in grinning faces, as people greet one another by name, in the midst of bowed heads during prayer and in lifted faces as we worship.

Our ministry model is building Christian community around a shared meal and worship service.

Trinity Church's four contextualized congregations worship God in three locations across Indiana's capital city. The two congregations meeting in the Garfield Park neighborhood — one racially and economically diverse and the other consisting of Chin refugees from Myanmar — are provided ministry support by ministry teams and resources from the two congregations in the northern suburbs.

Ministry does not flow in only one direction. Stay-at-home moms, a retired chef, a physician, a railroad worker, school teachers, nurses, a college professor and a hotel

As soon as the doors open, the basement is flooded with neighbors and volunteers eager to connect with one another.

Vision



MADE FOR MORE
www.encountertrinity.com/garfield-park



"I have a heart that deeply loves those on the outskirts"

executive receive far more than they give when serving at Garfield Park.

As people finish their home-cooked meal, the worship service begins with the message, followed by engaging discussions around each table. Amber Summers serves as a table leader.

"I have a heart that deeply loves those on the outskirts," said Summers. "And of course, like God always does, [the people at my table] give me more than I could ever give them."

During the adults' service, youth under age 18 meet. Matthew Hines teaches the children and brings his family who eagerly embrace TCGP. Carin, his wife, serves in the meal ministry, his preschooler can't wait to see his teacher and his two teens, Ian and Silas, actively participate in the student ministry. "I continued going because my teenage son felt compelled by the Holy Spirit to do so. It has been powerful for our whole family." Ian and Silas have developed relationships with local teens that extend beyond Thursday nights.

"You people are doing a good thing," Keith offered at a church block party. He worked with his parole officer to adjust his ankle monitor to allow him to come to church every Thursday. "We need this [ministry]. You are making a community where there weren't none." The Garfield Park neighborhood has no downtown, few centers in which to gather and several distinct populations. TCGP is strategically poised at the intersection of these groups to be a bridge.

In 2012, former pastor Eric Key cast vision for a church that reaches across the neighborhood dividing lines — ethnic (Latino, Burmese, African-American, Caucasian) socio-economic, gender and age — what separates one from one another, to be united in the love of Christ. That vision continues even with a less-than-ideal arrangement as staff and volunteers live outside the community.

God has made it clear we are to continue to be his "ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us" (2 Corinthians 5:20) in Garfield Park.

We strive to be as incarnationally present as we can, because to do nothing until we have an ideal situation is not an option.

Recently, Kerry,* a Desert Storm vet, came to me in tears and smelling of alcohol after having listened to the sermon about God using us despite our human failure. "I know I'm going to hell because I'm a failure and a baby killer!" he cried. He was assured that what he had done on the battlefield was not beyond God's forgiveness, and that according to 1 John 1:9, if he confessed his sin, he was forgiven. He prayed with us and went away rejoicing in God's grace, freed from the dread of hell and separation from God that had tormented him for decades.

This is why volunteers serve Christ cross-culturally in their city every week.

This is why we trade the pursuit of warm-fuzzy feelings for humble obedience in the grit of raw life.

This is why we do not wait for an ideal situation. 🙌

*Name has been changed.

CATHERINE HOWIE

serves as campus pastor of Trinity Church / Garfield Park in Indianapolis.





AMPLIAR *Horizontes*

BY RON MCCLUNG

“Yo creo que el Señor ampliará aún más los horizontes.”

Al considerar el número de puertas inesperadas para ministrar que se han abierto para el Rev. Fredis “Freddy” Flores y su congregación en St. Joseph, Missouri, no es difícil creer que así será.

Hace varios años Flores dejó su trabajo en Denison, Iowa, y trasladó a su familia a St. Joseph para aceptar un trabajo mejor remunerado.

Había sido un laico activo en la Iglesia Fuente de Vida, una congregación wesleyana en Denison, pero descubrió que en St. Joseph no había iglesias wesleyanas - ni de habla española ni de habla inglesa.

Después de visitar varias iglesias y no sentirse cómodo en ninguna, Flores comenzó un culto de “altar familiar” cada domingo en su casa.

La familia se vestía bien como si fuera a la iglesia pero se sentaba en la sala de su casa.

Cantaban y oraban, y él le predicaba su esposa, Susana, y a sus hijos.

**“YO CREO QUE EL
SEÑOR AMPLIARÁ AÚN
MÁS LOS HORIZONTES.”**

Una vecina se enteró de lo que hacía la familia y preguntó si podía asistir. Flores le dijo que no porque era sólo para su familia. Sin embargo la vecina persistía y finalmente, después de hacer el culto en su hogar, Flores y su familia iban a la casa de la vecina y repetían el culto. Otros vecinos se enteraron de este culto y quisieron asistir. La congregación no planeada crecía. Flores compró sillas plegables de metal y convirtió su sótano en una capilla.

Al ver el crecimiento de la congregación, Flores contactó al Rev. Max Colaw, superintendente del Distrito Tri-State, quien vino y recibió al grupo como una congregación wesleyana, la Iglesia Cristiana Wesleyana Fuente de Vida. Cuando la iglesia había crecido al punto de que ya no cabía en el sótano, encontraron un edificio en mal estado. A través de sus ofrendas y trabajo duro, hicieron de este edificio un lugar adecuado para cultos de adoración y una escuela dominical.

Con el tiempo, por medio de alguien en su congregación, la iglesia

oyó de Naomi, una niña en El Salvador que fue hospitalizada con cáncer. La madre de la niña quería quedarse en el hospital con su hija, pero tuvo que dormir en el piso o afuera en la calle. La iglesia, que ya consistía de unos 70 miembros, dio ofrendas para ayudarla.

Lastimosamente Naomi murió, pero Luis García, un pastor de jóvenes que la había visitado en el hospital, oyó de Flores y su congregación. Deseando plantar una iglesia, García acudió a Flores por consejo. Flores conectó a García con el superintendente de la Iglesia Wesleyana de El Salvador, el Rev. René Meléndez. La Iglesia Fuente de Vida recogió más ofrendas y ayudó a García a construir una capilla, un aposento alto, en el segundo piso de su casa en la ciudad de Jucuapa en el departamento de Usulután en El Salvador. García le puso a la iglesia el nombre—¿qué otro?—Fuente de Vida. Actualmente unas 50 a 60 personas asisten los cultos.

A 15 minutos de Jucuapa vivía el Pastor José cuya iglesia se encontraba en dificultades. José le pidió ayuda a García. Las dos congregaciones comenzaron a tener cultos y otras actividades juntos. El número de asistentes aumentó y la denominación wesleyana los aceptó como una iglesia afiliada. Esta



iglesia, Revelación de Dios, ha crecido a 30 miembros.

García había heredado un terreno de su padre en un área rural llamado Llano Grande. García sentía del Señor dar una parte de este terreno para la construcción de una iglesia. Comenzó a hacer cultos en el terreno debajo de un palo de aguacate. Cuando Flores y su congregación en St. Joseph supieron de esta nueva iglesia, decidieron vender tamales y pupusas para apoyarla. Enviaron dinero para que la municipalidad proveyera luz y agua a la propiedad donde se reunía la iglesia.

Los hermanos en Llano Grande pusieron el cimiento y levantaron columnas y vigas para el techo, pero han dejado la construcción hasta que tengan fondos para seguir. Mientras tanto, han construido una choza con hojas de palmera la cual provee protección del sol pero no sirve de mucho en tiempos de lluvia. “Construimos según podemos,” dijo García. La Iglesia Fuente de Vida de Llano Grande tiene una asistencia de 25 a 30 en la choza y recién bautizó a cinco personas. El Pastor Álvaro Granillo y su esposa son los pastores de esta nueva iglesia.

De esta manera Dios ha llevado a Fredis Flores, un laico que salió de Iowa para Missouri sin ninguna intención de plantar una iglesia, en una jornada impresionante. No sólo plantó la iglesia en St. Joseph sino que él y su congregación han sido instrumentos para ayudar a plantar tres iglesias wesleyanas en El Salvador.

Ahora miembros de su congregación le están contando de contactos que tienen en otros países hispanoparlantes. ¿Quién sabe hasta dónde se ampliarán sus horizontes? 🍁





EXPANDING *Frontiers*

**"I THINK THE LORD WILL EXPAND
THE FRONTIERS EVEN MORE."**

When we consider the number of unexpected doors for ministry that have opened for Rev. Fredis "Freddy" Flores and his congregation in St. Joseph, Missouri, it's easy to believe his statement is true.

Several years ago, Flores left a job in Denison, Iowa, and moved his family to St. Joseph to take a better-paying position. He had been an active layman in Fuente de Vida (Fountain of Life) Church, a Wesleyan congregation in Denison, but he discovered there were no Wesleyan churches, either English- or Spanish-speaking, in St. Joseph.

After visiting several churches and not feeling comfortable in any of them, he began having a "family altar" service every Sunday. His family got "dressed up" as if going to church but sat in their living room. They sang, prayed and he preached to his wife, Susana, and their children. "We did everything but take an offering," he said.

A neighbor learned what they were doing and asked if she could attend. Flores told her "no" because he viewed it as just for his family. The neighbor persisted and eventually, after his home service, he and his family went to the neighbor's home and repeated the service. Other neighbors heard about it and wanted to join. His unintentional congregation grew. Flores purchased metal folding chairs and turned his basement into a chapel.

As the congregation grew, he contacted Rev. Max Colaw,

superintendent of the Tri-State District, who came and received them as a Wesleyan congregation, Iglesia Cristiana Wesleyana Fuente de Vida (Fountain of Life Wesleyan Christian Church). Outgrowing the basement chapel, they found a building, greatly in need of repairs. Through their offerings and hard work, they have made the building suitable for worship and Sunday school.

In time, through someone in their congregation, they heard of Naomi, a little girl in El Salvador who was hospitalized with cancer. Naomi's mother wanted to stay in the hospital with her but had to sleep on the floor or outside on the street. The St. Joseph congregation, only about 70 members strong, gave offerings to help.

Unfortunately, Naomi died, but Luis Garcia, a youth pastor who had visited her, heard about Flores and his congregation.

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Desiring to plant a church, Garcia looked to him for advice. Flores connected Garcia with the Wesleyan superintendent in El Salvador, Rev. Rene Melendez. Fuente de Vida in St. Joseph took more offerings and Garcia built a church, an upper room, in the second floor of his house in the town of Jucuapa, in the Usulután department (state) of El Salvador. He calls the church—what else?—Fuente de Vida, which is running about 50–60 in attendance.

Another pastor, José, 15 minutes away, was pastoring a struggling church and contacted Garcia for support. Together they started to hold services and other activities. As their numbers grew, the Wesleyan denomination accepted them as an affiliated church, called Revelación de Dios, and the congregation has grown to 30 members.

Garcia inherited a portion of land from his father in a rural area called Llano Grando. Garcia felt impressed by the Lord to give a corner of this land to build a church. He began holding services there under an avocado tree. When Flores and his St. Joseph congregation heard about it, they began selling tamales and pupusas (stuffed tortillas) to

support the new church. They sent money for the city to drop power and water lines to this property.

The church has built a foundation and erected pillars and rafters for a roof, but construction has stopped until they can afford to build more. Meanwhile, they built a hut with coconut tree leaves. It provides shelter from the sun in hot weather but doesn't do much to keep out the rain. "We build as we can," said Garcia. The Fuente De Vida Llano Grando Church is running 25–30 in the hut and recently baptized five believers.

For a layman who left Iowa for Missouri with no intention of starting a church, God has brought Fredis Flores on quite a journey. He not only planted the church in St. Joseph, but he and his congregation have also been instrumental in helping to plant three Wesleyan churches in El Salvador.

Now, members of his congregation are telling him about contacts in other Spanish-speaking countries. Who knows what frontiers will be expanded in the future? 🙌

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> VICTORY MOUNTAIN CAMP

Retired college instructor and accountant Ed Winslow has several note cards hanging in his North Carolina home, each written by a parent or grandparent of a child who has been a camper at Victory Mountain Camp. Each note card has a similar message: "Thank you for helping to lead my child or grandchild to Jesus."

When the former Eagle Scout retired from working full time, he discovered he had flexibility with his time and could structure it the way he wanted to. Winslow, a member of First Wesleyan Church in High Point, serves as a cabin counselor for two weeks every year. He's been doing it a long time. And he's seeing the fruit.





Ed Winslow ▶



"He appreciates his opportunity to be there and doesn't take that for granted," said Sherry Keye, director of children's ministries for North Carolina East District. "He looks forward to serving at camp every year in the hot, humid North Carolina summer. It's a sacrifice of comfort, relaxation and sleep, but Ed understands that it is all worth it to see kids receiving Christ."

JUST GET INVOLVED. *Be involved.* DON'T EVER QUIT.

And Winslow has been around long enough to note the impact on multiple generations: "I see kids who've grown up at camp and they're coming back — they're coming back and volunteering, training as counselors, coming back as pastors." Winslow knows the kids are at camp to have fun. His goal, he says, is for them to grow spiritually. And, he chuckles, "we're both going in the same direction in achieving both."

He is well aware that working with kids isn't everybody's calling. "The Lord gives different people different skills. Working with children may not be their thing. They may be sitting on a church board. I'm doing what's meaningful to me." But whatever may be someone's interest, he has advice for newly retired people with flexibility in their schedule: "Just get involved. Be involved. Don't ever quit."

As for Winslow, he's taking his own advice and has given the camp director some instructions, "When I get too old, you tell me, and I'll go bait hooks down at the lake."

About an hour and fifteen minutes east of Victory Mountain Camp, in the congregation of Love Chapel Hill, others are finding ministry that's meaningful to them. Love Chapel Hill meets in the Varsity, a landmark theater on Franklin Street in Chapel Hill that's been a fixture of the neighborhood for over 50 years. Like other congregations across the

denomination, on Pentecost Sunday, Love Chapel Hill celebrated National Church Multiplication Sunday, taking up the challenge to pray for church planters and collect a special offering.

The Love Chapel Hill church plant wanted to give away their offering, however. Part of it went to Lydia Odom, a recent University of North Carolina Chapel Hill college graduate and church member commissioned by Love Chapel Hill.

"One Sunday, we brought in Seth and Annelise Walker to share their vision for a new plant in Charleston," said Rev. Matt LeRoy, teaching pastor at Love Chapel Hill. "Prior to the service, Lydia was praying for clear direction for her future. She felt the Holy Spirit speak 'church planting' into her heart. As the Walkers stood to share, Lydia knew she was looking at her future. She changed her career plans and moved that summer to become the first member of the core team for Harbor Town Church. We could not be more proud of her courageous obedience."





IT WAS A STIRRING REMINDER OF ALL THOSE WHO HAVE *blazed the trail* AS THEY FOLLOW THE SPIRIT.

On Church Multiplication Sunday at Love Chapel Hill, generations merged as the congregation focused on supporting other church plants, not only financially, but also with prayer. While recent graduate Lydia Odom had been sent out, Rev. Carles Fletcher walked in to the nontraditional setting with theater seats. He joined in worship with the church plant that day. LeRoy remembers the occasion.

"We prayed by name for 10 of our partner



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plants and their pastors. We were blessed to have Rev. Carles worshipping with us. We asked him to come up and pray over the planters and churches, and over the future planters that the Holy Spirit is raising up.

"At 88 years old, Rev. Fletcher is an unassuming presence. But the whole church leaned in as they learned that in his 51 years of pastoral ministry, he planted the first and the last churches that he pastored. They were blown away as he prayed with a fiery passion, a heart still burning for the lost, his tenderness for people still fresh and right on the surface. It was a stirring reminder of all those who have blazed the trail as they follow the Spirit."

Fletcher's prayer recalls the words of Ed Winslow: "The Lord gives different people different skills. I'm doing what's meaningful to me. Just get involved. Be involved. Don't ever quit."

As campers at Victory Mountain grow up through the elementary years, some training to be counselors, some returning as pastors, a similar cycle of welcoming and sending pulses through Love Chapel Hill, a community adept at tilting between inviting and commissioning. The effects of engaging multiple generations spiral outward far beyond the reach of the North Carolina Piedmont or the travel reach of the Love Chapel Hill Bus as the Spirit raises up young and old, new and aged, to reach the world for Christ. ➤



THE EFFECTS OF ENGAGING MULTIPLE GENERATIONS *spiral outward* FAR BEYOND THE REACH OF NORTH CAROLINA.



ELIZABETH GLASS-TURNER

is managing editor of wesleyanaccent.com, an online magazine featuring leading voices across the Wesleyan Methodist family.



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NEW WESLEYAN CHURCHES

New Foundation

Members of the now former Grace Community Church in South Georgia have not only proven the dynamic Kingdom Force theme is vital and essential for the current culture of The Wesleyan Church (TWC), but that it can be performed and exemplified in a way that considers the multiethnic, multigenerational and multieconomic aspects that are just as essential as the theme itself.

The congregation demonstrated what's considered one of the most selfless and generous acts of faith when it voted to donate the church's remaining fund balance to relaunch a church, now called Sumter Chapel, at the end of Grace Community Church's life cycle. The hope was to guarantee that a Wesleyan church would still be present in the community, and it has proven successful.

"This is a church that said we're going to give our resources away to help a new church begin in our place and still reach our community," said Wayne Schmidt, General Superintendent of The Wesleyan Church. "You have an example of a church that has its greatest act of faith at the end of its life cycle in order to give and for the church to be [what] it wants to become."

The leader of Sumter Chapel, Pastor Drew Anderson, echoed similar sentiments. "Their decision was a courageous decision — to look at their situation and not just see something closing or giving up, but a sense of legacy of wanting to leave what they had in order to further the kingdom."

George Tunningly, a former member of Grace Community, was part of the group that decided a church restart should happen. "We could have gotten a pastor, but obviously it takes a certain type of person to grow a congregation. Just getting another pastor is not what it needed to grow," said Tunningly.

Schmidt is confident Anderson's leadership will help TWC reach the community surrounding Sumter Chapel in new ways. He expressed his excitement about Sumter Chapel's ability to exemplify the multigenerational, multiethnic and multieconomic factors from the beginning, something not all Wesleyan churches have been able to do in the past.



“It’s so much better if when a church begins, its DNA and its vision right from the beginning are [multifaceted],” explained Schmidt. “Santes [Beatty, director of Multiethnic Ministries] and others are really helping us ask,

since Sumter Chapel is considered a new church, it will make it easier for guests from different backgrounds to feel welcome.

“With this church, we decided to wipe the slate clean and build a new foundation,” said Anderson. “It

Their decision was a courageous decision — to look at their situation and not just see something closing or giving up, but a sense of legacy of wanting to leave what they had in order to further the kingdom.

what does it look like from the very beginning? We’re not trying to talk existing churches into making that journey. But the truth is, if churches could begin that way, it would be huge because they wouldn’t know anything different.”

Anderson added that Sumter Chapel will serve as a fresh start that will inevitably change the previous culture, such as embracing new expressions of worship. He believes

allows it to have the evidence of the kingdom being multiethnic, multi-economic, having women and men in leadership, focusing both on the local and international mission ... all of that can be a part of the DNA from day one, as opposed to having to get a shift.”

While he’s new to TWC, Anderson said it’s very obvious the denomination has a desire to be multifaceted in every walk of life.

Even though the transition might be a difficult one, starting from scratch is certainly a beneficial factor, and is just one of the ways TWC is starting a movement and demonstrating Kingdom Force. 🌱



CHAR J. PATTERSON
is a freelance writer.



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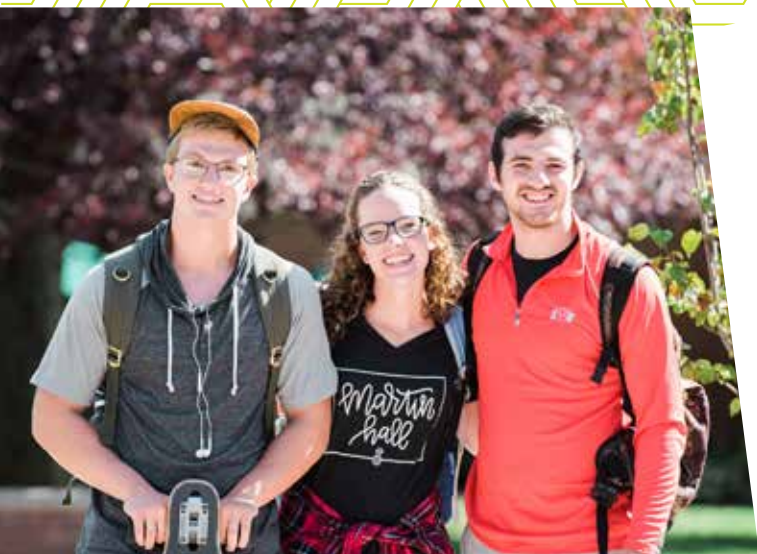
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 **FULL STORY**
wes.life/gospelgap



OKWU PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES PLANS TO RETIRE IN 2020

Dr. Everett Piper has announced his retirement as president of Oklahoma Wesleyan University, effective June 2020.

 **FULL STORY**
wes.life/piperretire

News



GLOBAL



GENERAL



COLLEGE



Morley Wesleyan Church celebrates 175 years

 **FULL STORY**
wes.life/morley



Miranda Cruz named director of The Sacred Alliance

 **FULL STORY**
wes.life/cruz



GREAT LAKES DISTRICT MERGER IS COMPLETE

The newly formed district includes the states of Illinois and Michigan, with 164 churches and a combined worship attendance of more than 34,000.

 **FULL STORY**
wes.life/greatlakes



CARIBBEAN WESLEYANS RE-ELECT CUMBERBATCH

The Caribbean Conference re-elected Dr. Joel Cumberbatch to a second four-year term as General Superintendent.

 **FULL STORY**
wes.life/caribbeanelection



South Coastal District announces new district leadership model with interim district superintendent

 **FULL STORY**
wes.life/southcoastal



Stephen Babby receives OKWU Presidential Award, serving 41 years on board

 **FULL STORY**
wes.life/babby



2018 Global Update shared with gratitude and longing that everyone who hears can be made new

 **FULL STORY**
gponline.org/global-update-2018

Events

Following are events designed to help The Wesleyan Church flourish. Explore each link to learn more about how you can increase your faith, knowledge and well-being.

2019

31-1
JAN-FEB



FUEL

Next Gen leaders conference

wesleyan.org/fuel

4-7
MAR

EXPONENTIAL • Church Multiplication Collective: Wesleyan shoulder events

wesleyan.org/exponential-east

12-15
MAY



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9
JUN



CHURCH MULTIPLICATION SUNDAY

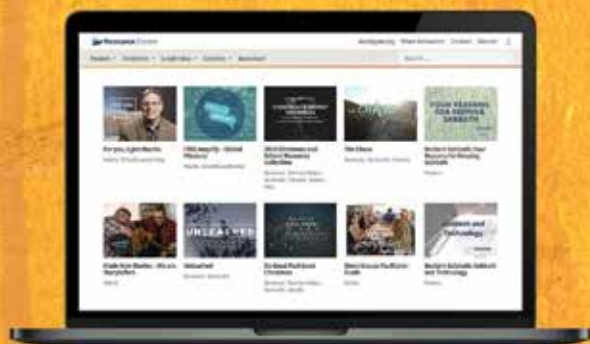
Pentecost Sunday: Church planting offering

wesleyan.org/cms

28-31
DEC

FOLLOW • International Wesleyan Youth Convention

wesleyan.org/follow-2019



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Remembered

DR. MELVIN DIETER (93)

died October 6. He served as the General Secretary of Educational Institutions for The Wesleyan Church. See pg. 31.



REV. STEVEN FLETCHER (67) died July 25. He was serving as the pastor of Nelson Street Wesleyan Church in Marion, Indiana.

EDNA JOHNSON (94) died August 29. She served as a missionary in Japan.

REV. JAMES RICHARD JUDD (89) died September 19. He pastored in Indiana.

REV. WILBUR KEY (77) died September 21. He pastored in South Carolina.

ESTHER "MARILYN" LIND (88) died August 22. She served with Wesleyan World Missions (now Global Partners) in Mexico and Colombia.

REV. RICK LONG (55) died September 29. He pastored in New York.

REV. TIMOTHY MCGUIRE (65) died August 16. He pastored in Iowa.

REV. DALE REYNOLDS (86) died July 30. He pastored in Michigan and Virginia and served as Virginia District superintendent.



ALMA ROBERTSON (97) died August 29. She served as a missionary in Sierra Leone.

REV. GEORGE SHEPPARD (86) died September 12. He pastored in North Carolina.

DR. BRUCE SMITH (67) died July 7. He pastored in California.

REV. JOHN WILLETT VESS (89) died September 13. He pastored in Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina.

REV. LARRY WOMELSDORF (80) died August 18. He was serving as pastor at Hazen Chapel Wesleyan Church in Amboy, Washington.

DR. PAUL WOOD (88) died August 4. He served as the director of Wesleyan Medical Fellowship and with Central Wesleyan College (now Southern Wesleyan University). 🌿



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Remembering

Dr. Melvin Dieter

General Secretary of Educational Institutions passes away

Dr. Melvin E. Dieter, 93, former General Secretary of Educational Institutions for The Wesleyan Church, died on October 6, 2018, in Lyndhurst, Virginia. His wife of more than 72 years, Hallie Arline Kirtz Dieter, died the following day.

In 1968, when the merging General Conference was held in Anderson, Indiana, the conference delegated the election of General Secretary for Educational Institutions to the General Board of Administration. Neither The Wesleyan Methodist Church nor the Pilgrim Holiness Church had such a department prior to merger. But since 10 colleges were carried over into the new denomination, the daunting task of reshaping promotional and fund-raising boundaries was assigned to the newly established department. The General Board of Administration chose Dr. Dieter, who was properly qualified for this responsibility.

He had served as president of Eastern Pilgrim College from 1961-1967 and had accepted the position of dean at Houghton College prior to the merging General Conference. He had also served as pastor of Chichester Wesleyan Church in Boothwyn, Pennsylvania. Dieter was active in the Pennsylvania-New Jersey District of the Pilgrim Holiness Church, having served many years on the District Board of Administration. He also served for a time as the chairman of the Houghton College Board of Trustees.

“It’s difficult for people who did not know Dr. Dieter to understand how profoundly he influenced The Wesleyan Church and what a driving force he was in bringing the merger of the Pilgrim Holiness Church and The Wesleyan Methodist Church to reality, since the question of which colleges would survive in such a merger and what the role of each would be was a major obstacle to the denominational merger of 1968,” said Dr. Earle L. Wilson, General Superintendent Emeritus.



According to Wilson, Dieter’s book, *The Holiness Revival of the 19th Century*, written in 1972, traces the development of the revival of the John Wesley view of sanctification of Christians in America and the revival of holiness in England, Germany and France. The book reveals that the holiness revival of the 19th century brought an emphasis of holiness to Lutheran, Presbyterian, Anglican and Methodist churches. It also describes how this revival brought into being the Free Methodist Church, the Church of the Nazarene, The Wesleyan Methodist Church and the Church of God, Anderson.

He was a graduate of Muhlenberg College; Navy Language Institute, University of Colorado, as a Chinese language specialist; Eastern Pilgrim College; Lehigh University and Temple University where he earned his Ph.D. in 1973. He left the Department of Educational Institutions in 1975 and went on to serve as a professor of church history and historical theology and later as vice-president and provost at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky, retiring in 1990. He was an author and considered an outstanding historian of the holiness movement.

The Dieters have one child, Judith, who survives. 🐦



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