

wesleyanⁿ life

THE MAGAZINE OF THE WESLEYAN CHURCH



*All One
in Christ*



defying the odds

Despite comprising only 13 percent of the U.S. population, roughly 40 percent of incarcerated persons in U.S. prisons are black. And while many outlets can tend to spend time disputing the reasons surrounding these numbers, the mentors of Kingdom Men Mentoring Program are committed to changing the lives of young men to defy these odds before the statistics become a reality.

Dr. Anthony Graham, pastor of New Hope Family Worship Center in Brooklyn, New York, launched Kingdom Men with other male leaders of New Hope's congregation in October of 2018 as a response to parents "who expressed their burden of addressing the many needs of their young males." Graham, Sean Bruno, Mike Keizer and Lloyd Lynch are dedicated to using biblical principles and sound teaching to invest in the physical, spiritual and emotional well-being of the congregation's young men.

Graham believes the primary challenge these boys face is the lack of a father figure in their homes. According to the 2017 U.S. Census Bureau, more than a quarter of America's children do not have a father — biological, step or adoptive — in the home, a statistic that is dramatically more staggering in the black community.

"This program came about because we sensed in our heart that there was a need, a deep-seated need existing in our community — and not just in the East New York, Brooklyn community, but probably across the nation — for fathers to step up and be examples, role models, mentors," Graham said. The Kingdom Men mentors have set out to act, in many ways, as that missing figure to the young men they serve. Convening twice a week, Kingdom Men meet in individual and group settings to impart advice, emotional support, guidance, knowledge and motivation to the young men enrolled in the program.

! LEARN MORE

about New Hope Family Worship Center
newhopefamilyworshipcenter.org



"Our main objective was to raise a future generation of young, godly men through this program, where you could see positive and permanent change in them so that wherever they go, they would have an impact, and you could actually see something different about them," Bruno said.

The Kingdom Men mentors believe this change is rooted first in investing in the spiritual lives of these young men.

"We believe that in addition to all the other things that we can help young men explore and understand, they need to have a relationship with God,"

Graham said. But this biblical teaching almost always informs understanding in other aspects of life.

The mentors offer assistance ranging from peer relationships to academic assistance. "Nothing is off the table — whatever is on their mind, whatever issues they might be having with their mom, their dad, whatever is affecting their school work," said Bruno. "They could talk to us about whatever they might be going through. And then we try to come up with ways we can assist them, even to getting the parents involved."

Parents and guardians are key program elements. A guardian, usually a single mother, initiates enrollment. Mentors work to ensure healthy relationships and more proactive communication.

The boys are frequently reminded of passages such as Ephesians 6:1–3, Proverbs 6:20–23 and Exodus 20:12, which speak to the promises found in obedience when children honor their father and mother.

From its inception in the fall of 2018 with one participant, the Kingdom Men Mentoring Program has grown to six young men in the New Hope community, ranging from ages 12 to 17, and the mentors are looking to expand even further, transitioning out of the church umbrella and into Brooklyn.

Responding to this growth, mentors are asking for prayer as they work to obediently move into the margins: prayers that wisdom, insight and strategies to help the young men are made known; prayers that parents access this available help; and prayers for this careful expansion of Kingdom Men.

The mentors' passion for these young men is unwavering, as they work to biblically refine their lives.

"The statistics are speaking to us, so we need to do something," Graham said. "I believe that if you touch a life, you could save a family, you can save a generation. Jesus is the answer; it's not more jails — it's Christ."

"So, we are trusting God that through this program, we will touch more young people, more young people will have a personal relationship with Christ and decisions will be changed. And as a result of changed decisions, we will have changed destinies." 🌿



MICAH KIMBALL

Micah Kimball is a communications intern for The Wesleyan Church.





Partners IN MINISTRY

I reached 40 years in ministry this May, and I'm devoting myself to the sentiment of the song lyrics, "Count your blessings, name them one by one, count your many blessings, see what God has done."

One of the greatest blessings has been to work with amazing ministry teams while serving with Kentwood Community Church (Grand Rapids, Michigan), Wesley Seminary (Marion, Indiana) and now as General Superintendent.

There is a deeply unique joy of not only pursuing God's mission but doing it together with colleagues who "spur one another on toward love and good deeds" (Hebrews 10:24).

The strongest teams fully engage the gifts of both women and men. As The Wesleyan Church seeks to have a Kingdom Force movement, I've been studying the original movement of God launched at Pentecost. I've

particularly dug into the relationship of the Apostle Paul with Priscilla and Aquila — and that has stirred gratitude for the privilege I've had to work with so many capable women.

In a General Board meeting this past May, Jo Anne Lyon shared her annual report as ambassador of The Wesleyan Church. In her report, she talked about the power of men and women working together, and the guidelines she has followed to keep those relationships strong and missional in nature. Be sure you read her article on **page 6** about the benefits and appropriate boundaries of women and men partnering in ministry.

We are brothers and sisters in Christ and colleagues in ministry.

Our relationships are not marked by fear and suspicion but upon the biblical foundation of who we are in Christ.

That positions us to be imperative parts of the Kingdom Force that God calls us to be! 🙌



DR. WAYNE SCHMIDT
General Superintendent
The Wesleyan Church

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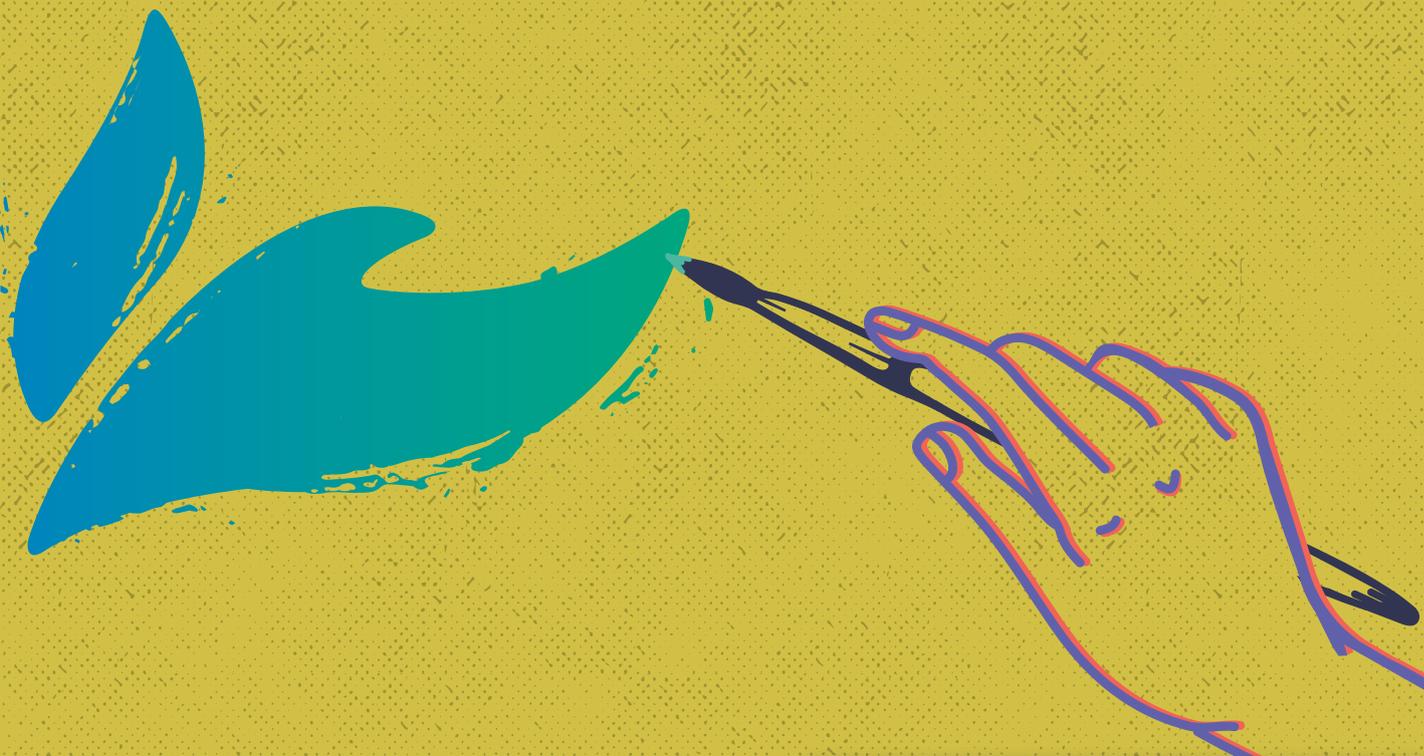
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Kingdom FORCE

*There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither
slave nor free, nor is there male and female,
for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Galatians 3:28

wesleyan life

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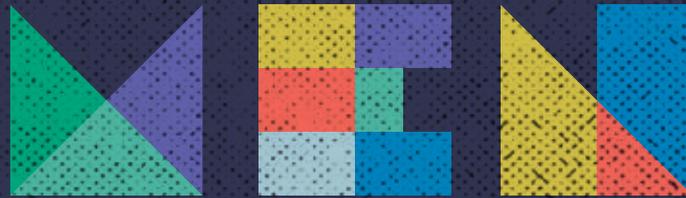
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— and —



I continually hear discussion of the pros and cons of men and women working together, particularly in local church settings. When news hits of male and female pastors having moved from a professional to intimate relationship, fear escalates.

So, the rules multiply. “Sorry, Jo Anne, I couldn’t meet with the city councilman for lunch today as I could not find a chaperone,” explained a woman serving as a large independent church campus pastor. Recently, a local church lay treasurer, a woman, told me her pastor, a man, will not meet with her alone to discuss church business. Incidentally, she is much older than he and successfully works with men in the marketplace.

I once met with a pastor who felt he had to tell me his office door had a window as he closed it, as if to clarify I couldn’t use this opportunity

an unintended result is that women are objectified, and men are seen as weak, needing the rules for protection from themselves.

HOMBRES

Español

- y -

MUJERES

Trabajando Juntos

A menudo, escucho discusiones sobre las ventajas y desventajas de hombres y mujeres trabajando juntos, particularmente en el contexto de la iglesia local. Cuando publican noticias de pastores masculinos y femeninos que han pasado de una relación profesional a una relación íntima, el temor aumenta.

Entonces, las reglas se multiplican. “Lo siento, Jo Anne, hoy no pude almorzar con el concejal porque no pude encontrar un ‘chaperón,’” explicó una mujer que servía como pastor asistente de una iglesia grande e independiente. Recientemente, la tesorera de una iglesia local me dijo que su pastor, un hombre, se niega a reunirse a solas con ella para conversar sobre los negocios de la iglesia. Ella es mucho mayor que él y trabaja con éxito al lado de hombres en el mundo secular de los negocios.

Una vez me reuní con un pastor que al cerrar la puerta de su oficina, sentía la necesidad de informarme que la puerta tenía una ventana, como si

tuviera que aclarar que yo no podía usar esa oportunidad para algo ilícito. En otra ocasión, un pastor me encontró en el hotel donde yo estaba hospedada para que desayunáramos juntos. Pero cuando nos íbamos a la iglesia, él sugirió que su asistente viniera para llevarme. Honestamente, yo estaba confundida. Él explicó que no debía estar a solas en el carro con una mujer.

El resultado no intencionado de casi todas estas reglas es que las mujeres se ven como objetos, y los hombres como débiles necesitando las reglas para protegerlos de sí mismos. En general, tales reglas prohíben que la mujer contribuya en el proceso de tomar decisiones dentro de la institución, en desarrollar relaciones profesionales saludables, y en aprender información importante compartida en conversaciones informales.

En 2008 yo fui la primera mujer en ser elegida Superintendente General en La Iglesia Wesleyana. Éramos tres

for something more illicit. On another occasion, a pastor met me for breakfast at the hotel where I was staying. But when we got ready to go to the church, he suggested having his assistant pick me up. Frankly, I was confused. He explained he was not supposed to ride alone with a woman.

In almost all of these rules, an unintended result is that women are objectified, and men are seen as weak, needing the rules for protection from themselves. In general, these rules hinder women from providing input into institutional decision making, developing healthy professional relationships, learning important information shared in casual conversation.

In 2008, I was elected as the first female General Superintendent in The Wesleyan Church. There were three General Superintendents, and the other two were men. A rotating chair existed of what was then known as the Board of General Superintendents (BGS). Dr. Jerry Pence was chair.

Within 30 minutes of the election, Dr. Pence called a meeting of the three of us. He knew my presence would require dealing with the “rules” and that we quickly needed to know how to respond.

His first question was, “Are we going to travel together?” “Yes,” I responded, “we need to model that men and women can work together as followers of Christ.” The BGS secretary was Dr. Tom Armiger and he agreed completely. We three worked in this manner together for four years as colleagues, serving God and his Church. Not once did I feel minimized or sense any fear among us.

I remember when we were in a meeting with colleagues from various denominations. Dinner was planned at a restaurant not far from our meeting place. I was not going to return to the hotel and needed someone to ride with me so I could find the restaurant. (Full disclosure: I was spending the night with my grandkids.)

Around the corner came a respected colleague from another denomination. I bluntly, quickly and

with a laugh, called him by name and said, “Why don’t you ride with me to the restaurant so I can find it.” He immediately and in all seriousness said, “I cannot ride with you alone,” and moved quickly on down the hall. I still remember the shame that enveloped me in that moment. A few minutes later, Dr. Armiger came around the corner and, of course, rode with me. All this was part of our working culture.

Over the years, I have listened to many accounts of male and female pastors who have yielded to temptation. In most cases, all the rules appeared to be in place, prompting me to ponder the difference between visible and invisible rules.

Visible rules address behavior like the “window in the office door” and, “don’t ride in a car alone.” Invisible rules address attitude including the following examples:

Discuss Boundaries

Pastoral relationships are to be professional and collegial, not client-counselor. As pastors, it is very easy to fall into client-counselor roles because of pastoral care expectations. This practice should never happen with colleagues.

Power Dynamics

It is imperative that persons with power continue to grow in self-awareness and emotional intelligence. Otherwise, the most powerful person can fall into subtle temptations to abuse that power.

Work Culture

This one is strategic. Visible rules may be established, but attitudes often minimize women’s voices. I heard about a church’s bonding event during which male and female staff bonded separately because leadership decided the men’s bonding exercises would not appeal to the women. The result? Isolation and marginalization.

On a personal note, I am grateful for men in The Wesleyan Church who did not know about the visible rules and never crossed the invisible rules line. They became mentors, and I carry their wisdom in my heart and mind.

Drs. O.D. Emery, Ronald Brannon, Virgil Mitchell, Melvin Dieter, are some of the men with whom I have had many meetings, eaten in restaurants, traveled in their cars, talked in their offices with their door closed



*we need to model
that men and women
can work together as
followers of Christ.*

Superintendentes Generales, y los otros dos eran hombres. Los tres formábamos lo que en ese entonces se conocía como la Junta de Superintendentes Generales (JSG) que tenía una presidencia rotativa. El Dr. Jerry Pence fue el presidente.

Después de 30 minutos de la elección, el Dr. Pence convocó una reunión de los tres. Sabía que mi presencia requeriría tratar con las “reglas” y que rápidamente necesitábamos saber responder.

Su primera pregunta fue, “¿vamos a viajar juntos?” “Sí,” yo respondí, “tenemos que ser ejemplo de que los hombres y las mujeres pueden trabajar juntos como seguidores de Cristo.” El secretario de la JSG, el Dr. Tom Armiger, estuvo de acuerdo. Los tres trabajábamos juntos de esta manera durante cuatro años como colegas, sirviendo a Dios y a Su Iglesia. Ni una vez me sentí minimizada ni sentía miedo entre nosotros.

Me acuerdo de una reunión donde participamos con colegas de varias denominaciones. Programaron una cena en un restaurante cerca del sitio de la reunión. Yo no iba a regresar al hotel y necesitaba que alguien fuera conmigo en mi carro para que yo pudiera encontrar el restaurante. (Para efectos de transparencia, iba a pasar la noche con mis nietos.)

Entró en la sala un colega respetado de otra denominación. Yo franca y rápidamente, y con una risa amigable, lo llamé por nombre y le dije, “¿por qué no vas conmigo al restaurante para que yo pueda encontrarlo?” Inmediatamente y con toda seriedad él respondió, “No puedo ir a solas con usted.” Todavía recuerdo la vergüenza que me envolvió en ese momento. Minutos después el Dr. Armiger entró y me acompañó al restaurante. Todo esto fue parte de nuestra cultura de trabajo.

Durante los años, he escuchado muchos relatos de pastores, hombres y mujeres, que han cedido a la tentación. En la mayoría de los casos, todas las reglas parecían estar en vigencia, y esto me hizo considerar seriamente la diferencia entre reglas visibles y reglas invisibles.

Las reglas visibles se dirigen a conductas como “la ventana en la puerta de la oficina” y “no viajar en un carro a solas”. Reglas invisibles

se dirigen a actitudes como en los ejemplos siguientes:

Limites de conversación

Relaciones pastorales deben ser profesionales y colegiales, no del estilo cliente-consejero. Como pastores es muy fácil caer en papeles de cliente-consejero debido a las expectativas del cuidado pastoral. Esta práctica nunca debe adoptarse con colegas.

Dinámicas de poder

Es imperativo que personas con poder continúen creciendo en la conciencia de sí mismo y en inteligencia emocional. De otro modo, la persona más poderosa puede caer en la tentación sutil de abusar de su poder.

La cultura de trabajo

Este punto es estratégico. Se pueden establecer reglas visibles, pero las actitudes a menudo minimizan la voz de la mujer. Oí decir que cierta iglesia organizó un evento para establecer vínculos entre el personal, pero los hombres y las mujeres se reunían aparte porque el liderazgo había decidido que las dinámicas para los hombres no apelarían a las mujeres. El resultado fue aislamiento y exclusión.

En una nota personal, quisiera decir que estoy agradecida con los hombres en La Iglesia Wesleyana que no sabían las reglas visibles y nunca quebrantaron las reglas invisibles. Se hicieron mis mentores, y yo llevo su sabiduría en mi corazón y en mi mente.

Los Doctores O.D. Emery, Ronald Brannon, Virgil Mitchell y Melvin Dieter son algunos de los hombres con quienes he tenido muchas reuniones, comido en restaurantes, viajado en sus carros y conversado con ellos en sus oficinas con la puerta cerrada sin que me recordaran de su ventana. Yo pude llamarles para hacerles preguntas. Influenciaron mi vida con enorme sabiduría y consejos sobre el liderazgo, comenzando cuando yo estaba en los treinta y los cuarenta.

and without being reminded about its window. I could phone them with questions. They influenced my life with enormous wisdom and leadership specifics, beginning when I was in my 30s and 40s.

Not once did we talk about our marriages, personal struggles or intimate details of our lives. We always related at a professional, collegial level. I remember a rather humorous time when at an interdenominational meeting, Dr. Mitchell suggested I attend a specific meeting, saying he would babysit my four children, all under the age of 9. And, he did. He empowered my leadership by giving me voice (which he already had) at this meeting.

Men and women working together is not new. Jesus modeled this with Mary, Martha, Joanna, Mary Magdalene, Susana and others with whom he interacted. In Romans 16, Paul thanks 28 leaders who have labored with him in the ministry. Ten are women.

I remain struck by the statement, “O what a victory Satan won when he paralyzed two-thirds of the army,” written in 1891 by holiness scholar, Reverend W.B. Godby, in a pamphlet, “Woman Preacher.” It is my earnest prayer that the men and women called by God to minister in The Wesleyan Church will use the information shared in this article to begin healthy conversations and practices that will strengthen their ability to serve more effectively and inclusively.

God has called us as his Kingdom Force for these days. He has called men and women. The task will be accomplished by both working together. We have the choice to be a part of his Great Commission and Commandment for a time such as this, together. ↩



JO ANNE LYON

is General Superintendent Emerita and ambassador of The Wesleyan Church.

Ni una vez hablamos de nuestros matrimonios, luchas personales o detalles íntimos de nuestras vidas. Siempre nos relacionábamos en un nivel profesional y colegial. Me acuerdo de un incidente un poco gracioso cuando en una conferencia interdenominacional el Dr. Mitchell sugirió que yo asistiera a una reunión específica diciendo que él cuidaría de mis cuatro hijos, todos menores de los 9 años. Y lo hizo. Fortaleció mi liderazgo dándome voz (la cual él ya tenía) en esa reunión.

Que los hombres y las mujeres trabajen juntos no es nada nuevo. Jesús nos dio ejemplo de esto en su interacción con María, Marta, Joanna, María Magdalena, Susana y otras mujeres. En Romanos 16 Pablo les agradece a 28 líderes que han trabajado con él en el ministerio. Diez son mujeres.

Me quedé impactada por esta declaración, “Oh, qué victoria Satanás ganó cuando paralizó a dos tercios del ejército”, escrita en 1891 por el escolar de santidad, el Reverendo W.B. Godby, en un folleto titulado, “La Predicadora”. Es mi oración sincera que los hombres y las mujeres llamados por Dios a ministrar en La Iglesia Wesleyana empleen la información en este artículo para comenzar conversaciones y prácticas saludables que refuercen su habilidad de servir más eficaz e inclusivamente.

Dios nos ha llamado a ser su Fuerza de Reino para este tiempo. Ha llamado tanto a mujeres como a hombres. La misión se cumplirá con los dos trabajando juntos. Nos toca escoger ser parte de su Gran Comisión y Mandamiento para un momento como éste, juntos. ↩

! RESOURCES FOR WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

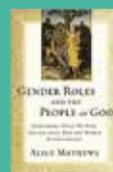


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NAVIGATING GENERATIONAL *Transitions*



Though born in Bathsheba, St. Joseph, Barbados, my parents moved to England in the 1960s by invitation of the British government to work in public transport systems, post offices and hospitals. Their plan was to stay between 5 to 10 years before returning. Their plans changed, and we are in our fourth generation of those born and raised in England.

When my parents arrived in England, they experienced discrimination from churches and society. Rental property advertisements often said, “No Irish, no Blacks and no dogs.”

This treatment led to like-minded people gathering to worship in homes and school halls, until they could purchase their own church buildings. Last year, 60 years of The Wesleyan Church in England was celebrated.

While we thanked God for all he had done, we began to realize the church had become a place of refuge and safety for some of us, and we were, in fact, hiding from the world outside. We had little or no connection with our communities, most of our activities were inward-focused. Our younger congregation was leaving our churches, citing out-of-date methods and confusing language.

We recognized that if we did not change the way we communicated the gospel, our church would not survive. For too long, we celebrated what God had done instead of asking God what he wanted us to do now. Change was happening even if we were resisting it.

As with all change, some members resisted, content to do what we had always done. Others, however, saw that if we refused change, we could not expect a different result or growth.

Jesus commanded us in John 13:34–35 to love one another as he loves us, making us known as his disciples through our love. This Scripture challenged my heart and mindset.

To return to Christ's mission and avoid our self-focus, we needed to ask: how do we navigate missional and generational transitions?

I prayed over how to tell our leaders (most of whom were older than me) we needed to change so we could be understood by the present generation. My comments could be received as rude and disrespectful, as part of my culture is to respect elders. God answered my prayers, revealing I needed to build relationships by asking questions before making statements and being patient as others considered the changes we proposed.

God is teaching us what it really means to love those who disagree with us as we discuss and debate from very different perspectives. We are finding there are ways different generations can work together to reach the world for Christ, primarily through succession plans.

Jesus came, made disciples and left — a pattern we should follow as leaders. Indeed, I believe it is a requirement of a good leader to train others to replace us. We began to understand this important leadership truth when four of our pastors passed

away in six months' time. Jesus invested in people; we must make the time to do the same. Otherwise we can be left with large gaps in ministerial experience that is not easily made up.

My questions to fellow leaders: Are we holding onto our leadership batons too long? Are we investing all God has given us into future generations?

The next generations will have different methods and styles of leading because the issues faced by each generation require new strategies.

Paul said it well: "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow" (1 Corinthians 3:6).

As we enact these succession plans to be more fruitful in ministry, we are taking risks, prayerfully planting new churches and learning what it means to love one another.

"Everywhere to everywhere" — Global Partners' initiative to have international Wesleyan churches sending missionaries out to be a Kingdom Force — is right in front of us or next door. In cities across the United Kingdom, one will regularly

see people of all different backgrounds, ethnicities, socio-economic statuses, ages and ideologies. God is challenging us to come out of our churches, leave our comfort zones and learn again what it means to be a disciple who makes disciples.

May we all live out Joshua 1:9 no matter the leadership role God has led us to: "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

So, go everywhere, be everywhere! 🏹



RUTH LOWE

is an ordained pastor of The Wesleyan Church and has served as superintendent of the British Isles District since June 2018.



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GO INTO ALL THE WORLD

Mark 16:15 (NIV)



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It's not uncommon for Jon Lewis, a Gwinnett County, Georgia, police department chaplain, to receive a call to minister to a suicide victim's family. One of 12 chaplains serving the 800-person force, he may arrive at a crime scene and work with victims' families while the police are doing their work.

Recently, Lewis responded to a murder-suicide, where a man had killed his girlfriend before taking his own life. Lewis ministered to the woman's six-year-old daughter, who was unaware of everything that happened. She just wondered why the television news helicopter was flying overhead.

Serving as a pastor-on-call at 12Stone Church, Lewis conducted 15 funerals last year, most the result of some traumatic situation. "When the call comes," he said, "I don't know what I will find when I arrive, so I pray, 'Holy Spirit, speak through me.'"

Lewis is also involved with the Atlanta Mission, particularly its Potter's House, a 570-acre facility housing 100 men. The facility offers a year-long

program assisting victims of addiction and homelessness, helping them find jobs and get back on their feet. Lewis preaches there on Tuesday morning and conducts a Wednesday evening discipleship gathering, mentoring participants to build self-confidence and leadership skills. He said, "There are two types of pain — the pain of changing and the pain of staying the same." He mentors toward change.

Lewis also leads a non-profit organization called "Heirborn Servants," which helps victims of domestic violence and sex trafficking. "Ultimately," Lewis said, "everybody needs a car." If they cannot afford one, the organization partners with them through their Give Rides program by paying half the cost of LYFT or Uber rides for a specified period. They also find dependable vehicles to give away to qualified persons. They recently gave their ninth car to a single mother. A mentor contacts each woman weekly or even daily, connecting them to a church and a small group.

"Some days, I feel like I'm 100 years old spiritually because of the opportunities I have had to serve," said Lewis. 

MEETING A Wide Range OF NEEDS

RON MCCLUNG

"There are two types of pain – the pain of changing and the pain of staying the same."

FROM *Addicts* TO
CHURCH PLANTERS

BY TRICIA RIFE





We became full-blown alcoholics and drug addicts, but we managed to function in our dysfunction

One Sunday morning, Arturo (Art) Rodriguez walked up to Rev. Keith Loy at Celebrate Community Church in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and said, “I am the guy to go to Sioux City.”

Immediately intrigued, Loy said, “Grab a chair, and tell me why.” And so began the conversation as to why Art thought he should move to nearby Sioux City, Iowa, to plant a church.

Born in El Salvador, Art lived there until age 11 when he moved to Los Angeles, California, where his mom spent time in jail. She placed her faith in Jesus there. When released, she began attending church and asked Art to join her. Art had become involved in the L.A. gang life and refused repeatedly. He finally agreed when she asked if he’d record a church service. That day, at age 19, Art knelt at the altar and accepted Jesus as his Savior.

Joining Art in life and church planting is his wife, Noelia. Known as Nellie, she also has a miraculous story, full of pain and redemption. Born in Nicaragua, Nellie’s parents both worked and offered her a stable, happy and loving home. Everything changed at age 5, though, when Nellie was sexually abused by a relative.

A year later, her dad left. The abuse continued. Nellie, her mom and sisters eventually left Nicaragua traveling to Guatemala, Mexico and finally to the United States.

While they had safely arrived in the “land of the free and the home of the brave,” Nellie remained far from “free.” She was abused by countless men in exchange for money so they could buy food. Nellie was drowning from the years of abuse, “with days and nights of fear, hopelessness, depression and despair.”

Nellie met Art when she began attending his church while a teenager. She noticed he was different — that he was an honorable young man who treated her with dignity, kindness and respect.

“I’d never seen that kindness in my life before,” said Nellie. She learned about Jesus and placed her faith in him at 14.

The couple later married and for seven years they followed God and grew in their faith. They had children and fell deeper in love. But



! WATCH ART & NELLIE’S STORY
wesleyan.life/addicts-to-church-planters



eventually, they “stopped doing the things that draw a person closer to Jesus,” and he became a non-existent part of their lives.

“Social drinking and doing drugs with friends on the weekends progressed into drinking alcohol and getting high every day,” said Nellie.

They lived this way for 20 years.

“We became full-blown alcoholics and drug addicts, but we managed to function in our dysfunction,” said Nellie. Two of their three children began drinking alcohol but soon turned to drug use also.

One morning, Art awoke thinking, “Today is the day to stop drinking.” He knew it was God speaking, asking him to begin radically moving his life in another direction. Art obeyed.

Day one passed alcohol free. Day two, day three ... For 29 days, Art resisted the desire to drink with a strength only from the Lord. Then, 30 days after quitting alcohol “cold turkey,” he became terribly sick. Tests revealed kidney disease, stage five, meaning his kidneys had lost nearly all ability to do their job effectively. At this stage, dialysis or transplant is eventually needed to live.

Nellie volunteered to donate a kidney. But the odds were against her: she had a one-in-a-100,000 chance of being a perfect match. In the midst of months of testing, Art heard from God again.

“I was praying and heard the Holy Spirit tell me, ‘You are going to preach in Iowa.’” Dumbfounded, Art wondered what those words meant. The couple did not know if Nellie’s kidney was an option, and his kidneys were functioning at only five percent. How could he have the strength to preach?

Art held onto God’s words. Soon afterwards, test results miraculously proved Nellie’s kidney was a match. Transplant surgery was performed successfully.

During Art’s health crisis, the Lord began drawing the couple back to him. They began attending Celebrate Church and heard Loy, senior pastor, announce plans to plant a church in Sioux City. Art’s “heart jumped” because he knew that was where he was to preach in Iowa.

The Rodriguezes are licensed ministers with The Wesleyan Church seeking ordination as they prepare for a September 2020 church launch. While making a vision trip to Sioux City, their hearts broke for the city where 42,000 people do not have a church home. As they walked through one area, they met people **“who were in the same circumstances that we were before” — addicts in need of a Savior.**

“My heart is broken at the situation I see [fellow addicts] in,” said Nellie. “I didn’t see hope. I didn’t see myself coming out of that. Everyone is broken in some way.”

Loy is “overjoyed and excited” that God is confirming Celebrate’s call to plant in Sioux City and knows the Rodriguezes are the right couple.

“Lives will be totally transformed,” said Loy. “Marriages will be healed; addictions will be broken, and people will come into a saving relationship with Jesus.”

Reed DeVries, Celebrate’s church-planting overseer, is confident God will use Art and Nellie to have a great kingdom impact in Iowa and beyond.

“We believe thousands of people will come to know Jesus and that many other churches will be planted out of their church.”

Celebrate has planted 10 churches, with another three (including Sioux City) in the pre-launch phase.

The Rodriguezes just want to be obedient to God’s leading in sharing that there is hope found in Jesus, even if someone is stuck in a hopeless pit.

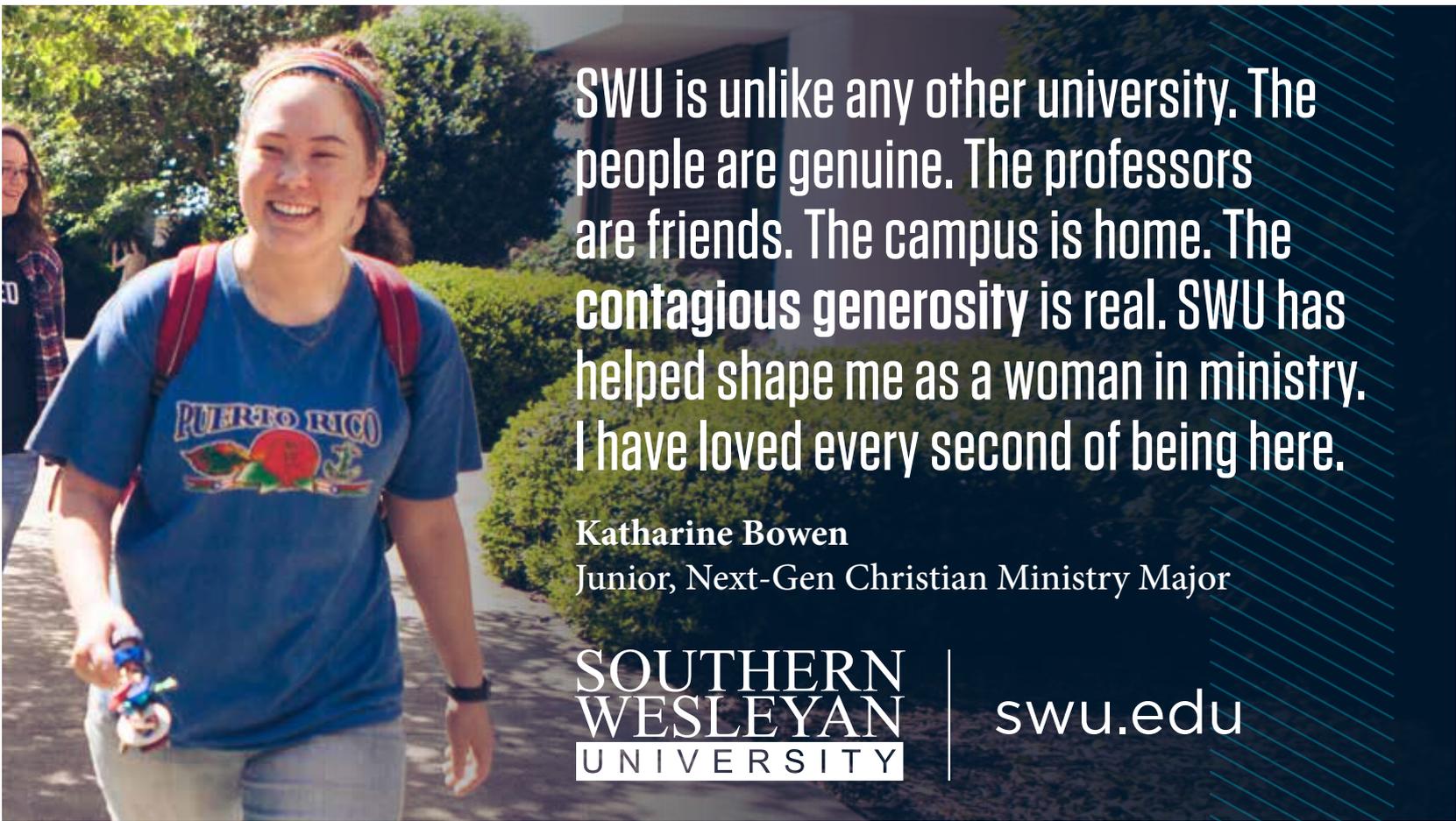
“We are so grateful for the life we have now compared to the life we had before,” said Nellie.

“There is nothing that is going to stop us from using that and spreading the Word of God because there are a lot of people where we were. There is hope.” 🕊



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Learn more about Celebrate Community Church celebrate.church



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Katharine Bowen
Junior, Next-Gen Christian Ministry Major

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TO Know & Be Known



“There are unsaved, unchurched people everywhere. That’s our target. It doesn’t matter what our skin is wrapped in. The quicker we quit seeing past skin color, the better we’ll be.”

Notice that Ted Young, lead pastor of a burgeoning church plant in LaPlata, Maryland, doesn’t say to ignore skin color. In fact, he says something paradoxical:

It doesn’t matter what our skin color is; we shouldn’t ignore skin color.

Young has been a member of New Life Wesleyan Church in LaPlata for 14 years. He has volunteered faithfully, including service as LBA head trustee.

Encounter Church, Young’s church, is New Life’s eighth church plant. New Life is known for multiplication. Its 20-acre campus has three primary worship centers, and one is a smaller building affectionately known as “The Chapel.” The Chapel has been a church plant launching point and is currently housing Encounter Church.

Young and his wife, Tiffany, have always felt called to be pastors. After building a successful landscaping company, Young knew it was time to step out of commercial industry and into spiritual ministry.

He was following the footsteps of his grandfather, who planted several churches in South Carolina.

Young encourages Encounter Church's diverse membership to live Spirit-led lives because the Holy Spirit leads Christ followers to holiness. Spirit-led living also leads us to spread the gospel. But rather than spreading the Good News in segregated, isolated places, congregant diversity ensures the gospel reaches every part of the city.

"Getting past the barrier of race allows us to understand each other better," said Young. "We have to move forward. We have to move out. Christ made us to live in community. When you live among only your type of race, you're missing out."

The church, asserts Young, should be a diverse community — a place of knowing and a place of being known. He points out that The Wesleyan Church began as a denomination that championed racial unity. In 1791, John Wesley penned his final letter, and he wrote it to William Wilberforce, renowned British abolitionist. Wesley wrote, "O be not weary of well-doing! Go on, in the name of God and in the power of His might, till even American slavery (the vilest that ever saw the sun) shall vanish away before it."

Only 50 years later, Americans across the pond were forgetting their abolitionist roots. So, in 1842, Orange Scott and others stood against slavery to form the Wesleyan Methodist Church. Young embraces this Wesleyan heritage.

"This is who we are. As a denomination, our roots are ethnically diverse; we stand up for one another."

Young mentions two of many notable biblical precedents for diverse community. Christ's interaction with the Samaritan

woman in John 4 violated current cultural norms for multiple reasons. Not only was Jesus interacting with a woman, but also, Jews and Samaritans were segregated ethnic groups. Additionally, Jesus' disciples, notes Young, were a diverse makeup of men coming from many walks of life. They were a racially, economically and socially diverse group.

Not only should we celebrate diversity in the Body of Christ, but we must also intentionally seek it. New Life Lead Pastor Mike Hilson said, "The church should always be looking to reach humans. Jesus died for humans. Therefore, every type of human is our mission.

"There is never a reason to limit the grace of Christ as offered through our individual congregations on any basis: rich, poor, black, white, U.S. citizen, non-citizen — all of these are distinctions made by culture and not recognized by the call of the gospel."

Ethnic diversity doesn't happen accidentally. It is an intentional process the local church needs to seek. A starting point, Young notes, is for local pastors to get to know other community pastors who represent different racial and ethnic groups.

"Be honest with those whom you are trying to reach," said Young. "Let them know, 'We want to learn. We want to get better at diversity.'"

The best way to learn?

"Go to the community where you want to serve and start serving." 🌱



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www.newlife.live



DALENE FISHER

is the assistant provost, dean of Arts and Sciences and assistant professor of English at Oklahoma Wesleyan University.



LEARNING TO

love & lead

BY A GLOBAL PARTNERS AUTHOR



Nora began
to pray, telling
Jesus that
she chose to
believe in him!

It was winter in her Central Asian home city 19 years ago, when Nora*, a doctor, faced overwhelming discouragement in her family and career. Her country was still finding its way as a recently independent nation, paralleling her personal struggle.

Bilingual in the trade language as well as her country's native language, Nora had just accepted work as a teacher in a language learning center operated by a group of Jesus followers. She traveled on small city buses in the cold rain between her new students' homes, helping them learn basic phrases then progressing further into reading and speaking her language.

Seasons passed and Nora acquired more students. As students' conversational abilities grew, several asked for help learning to read the Bible and talking about Jesus. Nora, raised a nominal Muslim, was politely uninterested in Jesus. In fact, *the more she heard about Jesus, the more she felt she should be trying harder to seek God instead.* She turned to the Koran and began seriously practicing the Muslim faith embraced by almost everyone in her country. She prayed regularly and tried harder to please God.

At first, Nora felt pleased with herself, at peace that she was trying to follow God. But she kept teaching students and hearing about Jesus. Sometimes she would gently debate with them, but as she got to know them better, she experienced something previously unknown. These students became her friends, showing her a new kind of love. They genuinely wanted to know and care for her — they planned surprise birthday celebrations, gave her gifts and prayed with and for her. Nora's respect for Jesus as a good teacher and prophet grew. She sometimes attended church gatherings and listened to her Christian friends.

Through her students, Nora connected with a Christian medical professionals group and was invited to a conference in Europe. She spoke little English and found herself alone after the conference, in an airport in a foreign country where she knew no one and understood nothing. After hours of waiting for a contact who never arrived and whom she did not know, she prayed in desperation, "Jesus, if you're real, would you get me out of here? If you do, I'll believe in you."



The more she heard about Jesus, the more she felt she should be trying harder to *seek* God instead.



A few minutes later, Nora approached an information desk where a man spoke to her. Somehow, she understood him, even though she sensed his language wasn't hers. He asked what was wrong, called her contact and arranged transportation to her lodging. Later that evening, while lying in bed as a stranger's house guest, Nora realized the only explanation was that Jesus had made it possible for her to get there. Remembering her earlier promise, Nora began to pray, telling Jesus that she chose to believe in him!

When back home, Nora shared her experience with a few people. She often attended house church meetings, so some of her student friends soon realized the depth of transformation that had begun. Over the next few years, Nora faithfully gathered with other believers and soaked in every opportunity for growing in her new faith.

She understood Jesus was not just a good teacher or prophet, but the Son of God, and what that could mean for others.

In a country where men see themselves as culture defenders and are often slow to hear Jesus' call, Nora usually met with groups of women. They were mostly unmarried or widowed or had been abused or abandoned by their husbands. A local leader was

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eventually needed for the group, and the mission team sensed it was time to ask Nora to lead it. Nora was uncertain at first. But she was studying God's Word, learning to depend on prayer and willing to serve. She looked for opportunities to grow as a leader. Missionaries partnered with local leaders to offer training seminars for new church leaders on the Bible, leading groups and the meaning of church. Nora attended and grew in the wisdom and maturity of faith the Lord had already given her.

Today, several years later, Nora continues to grow in her faith in Jesus. As I drank tea with her in my living room before leaving the country for a new assignment, I was amazed at her depth of wisdom as she spoke about caring for and discipling the wounded women in her group.

Nora has discovered a spiritual gift of evangelism and loves working with the elderly, even seeing her mother come to faith in Jesus in her final months — something nearly unheard of in a culture so bound by Islamic traditions. Nora loves sharing her journey, meets with other house church leaders for prayer and fellowship and gently challenges people to understand Jesus' love.

In May 2019, Nora attended the International Conference of The Wesleyan Church (ICWC) in Barbados. For the first time, she met men and women who serve in leadership roles around the globe and was encouraged to hear their stories and learn what God is doing in their churches. Nora publicly shared her story there, thanking those who had helped make her faith journey possible. She closed her testimony with these words:

“There is less than one percent of people in my country who are following Jesus. So, we are the first generation of Christians ... We have a great need for missionaries, for workers. I know that it's because of missionaries that were sent to us that I am before you ... God orchestrated all of that.

“But it was because people were sent to me that I am here. I want to say thank you to all of those who were sending these people, because you have a great role in this. You sent these people to us ...

“Even though I'm a leader now, I still have a great need. We haven't grown up in Christianity; we don't have that Christian culture, and we need examples of what it looks like to follow Jesus.”



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WESLEY SEMINARY CELEBRATED 10 YEARS OF MINISTRY AND EQUIPPING ON AUGUST 8TH.

Seminary and church leaders gathered to acknowledge the many ways God has exceeded expectations and to prayerfully consider where he is leading the seminary.



FULL STORY
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News



GLOBAL



GENERAL



COLLEGE



SWU launches first doctorate program

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Doctrinal Symposium focuses on discipleship

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THE WESLEYAN CHURCH CONVENES ITS FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

More than 200 Wesleyans from over 50 countries gathered in Barbados.

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PENN YORK IS NEWEST DISTRICT OF THE WESLEYAN CHURCH

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Great Lakes completes merger

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North Carolina church celebrates 140 years of ministry

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wes.life/140years



Districts elect new superintendents

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wes.life/newdistrictsuperintendents

Events

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

2019

1-31
OCT



PASTOR APPRECIATION MONTH

Find ways to love and support your pastor

wesleyan.org/pam2019

9-12
OCT

CCDA (CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION)

Affinity Dinner: Oct. 10

wesleyan.org/ccda

5-7
NOV

MOSAIX CONFERENCE

Shoulder Event: Nov. 5

mosaix2019.com

28-31
DEC



FOLLOW

International Wesleyan Youth Convention

wesleyan.org/follow

2020

2-5
MARCH

EXPONENTIAL EAST

Shoulder Event: March 3

wesleyan.org/exponential-east

6-8
MAY

CAFO2020 (CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE FOR ORPHANS' ANNUAL SUMMIT)

Wesleyan/Hephzibah62:4 Shoulder Event: May 6

cafo.org/summit

31-3
MAY-JUNE



GENERAL CONFERENCE 2020

Unleashed so all can be made new

wesleyan.org/unleashed

Remembered

REV. ATWOOD COOL (90)

died December 8. He pastored in Michigan, New York, Ohio and Oregon.

REV. GLENN HEMRICK (60)

died June 13. He pastored in Georgia.

REV. DICK KAYLOR (90)

died April 27. He pastored in New York.

REV. EDWIN LUTHER (70)

died April 23. He pastored Kildee Wesleyan Church in Ramseur, North Carolina

REV. JOHN "JACK" MACKENZIE (93)

died May 21. He pastored churches in Canada.

ROSEMARY MADDUX (93)

died May 16. She served as a missionary with Wesleyan World Missions (now Global Partners) in Zambia.

REV. R.C. MATHIS (90)

died July 18. He pastored in Georgia.

REV. TIMOTHY MCCLELLAN (68)

died July 18. He pastored Lakeview Wesleyan Church in Marion, Indiana.

REV. PAUL MCKINLEY (87)

died June 26. He pastored in Virginia, Indiana, Texas, Georgia, Tennessee and Ohio.

REV. MARTIN MILLER (76)

died May 19. He pastored in Iowa.

REV. FRED MOORE (84)

died May 7. He pastored in New York and Pennsylvania.

REV. TERRY PENLAND (65)

died June 1. He pastored in North Carolina.

REV. MICHAEL SCARBROUGH (52)

died June 20. He pastored in Michigan.

REV. WILLIAM "BILL" TIETJE (61)

died June 21. He pastored in North Carolina, Montana and South Dakota.

REV. CARROLL UPTON (87)

died August 10. He planted churches in Wisconsin and also pastored in North Carolina. He served as district superintendent of the North Carolina East District from 1980 to 1984. 



VISIT [WESLEYAN.ORG/REMEMBERED](https://www.wesleyan.org/remembered)
TO READ A FULL LIST OF OBITUARIES.



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