

wesleyan life

THE MAGAZINE OF THE WESLEYAN CHURCH

CULTIVATING A CULTURE

*A Culture of
Multiplication.*

x



Mission House
an army of love.

*The Word became flesh and blood,
and moved into the neighborhood.*

John 1:14 (MSG)



We planted a church on accident.

God stoked our hearts to plant the gospel, and this is how we started in Salisbury, North Carolina. A city of nearly 35,000 people nestled between two major cities (Charlotte and Greensboro), Salisbury is a microcosm of where America is headed. It's a city in transition, known as a historic bedroom community. It has a bustling arts community and growing minority-majority demographic of 52 percent people of color and 48 percent white. More than 52 percent of the population is unaffiliated with a religious institution.

As stated earlier, planting a church was not our original intent. In 2015, we began our formal Sunday morning worship gatherings. Four years earlier, before we became an official church plant, we asked ourselves two basic questions:

- 1** What is God up to in our community?
- 2** How might we join in that movement of the Spirit?

We decided to live into The Message's translation of John 1:14: "The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood," and John

20:21: "Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.'"

We discerned that God had already moved into our city; that God had been here long before us. If God had already moved into our community, how were we going to follow in Jesus' footsteps?

We mobilized around our two basic questions. Several families began adopting time-honored Christian disciplines and practices: study of Scripture, discernment, prayer, fasting, table fellowship around food and stories, and acts of service in the diverse fabric of our community.

We became more present in our community with the God-that-is-already-there [Immanuel], and we listened and served. We cultivated relationships with a diversity of community stakeholders. We compassionately listened outside our racial and cultural comfort zones.

There was a pivotal moment at the beginning of our journey when we heard the Spirit whisper: "I am mobilizing an army of love; an army of those that have been crushed by death-dealing spiritual forces in this community." From the Spirit's push and prompting, we had our marching orders to be an army of love in this community.

One of the first words in the Gospel of Mark is to "repent" and believe the good news that what had been prophesied many millennia ago had become fulfilled in

Jesus. We gained a deeper appreciation for repentance and learned it was more than godly sorrow.

 **Watch video**
wes.life/missionhouse

Repentance was an invitation to live into a new holy imagination. Metanoia, the Greek word for repentance, means to have a mind/purpose beyond the one you have. We desired a Spirit-baptized imagination and asked, "How will God open up our holy imaginations to see and hear the newness of God for this place?"

One of the many ways we were to practice holy imagination was to respond to a crisis among young people in our community. Many are caught up in unjust systems, hurt families, despair,

violence and lack of spaces for engagement and maturation into adulthood. Holy imagining for us would be about cultivating creative-redemptive space in a community for youth.

Our first major practice was to partner with Inside-Out Global. They teach filmmaking skills and create space for youth to discover their strengths.

Our first project was for the youth to make public service announcements speaking to peer issues. Participants learned community, teamwork, filmmaking skills and many saw more life possibilities.

Their latest project was producing a documentary on Shuford Memorial School, an African-American school that existed during Jim Crow laws.

 **We are an army of love that follows three basic rhythms of holy love (Up, In and Out):**

- Love lifts us in corporate worship of God becoming our truest selves in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- Love connects us as a spiritual family on mission with Jesus.
- Love sends us into our community to be kingdom agents of healing, justice, peacemaking and culture-making.

May it be so for Mission House—and all of us as we seek to make Jesus known wherever we live. 

ANTHONY SMITH
serves as lead pastor at Mission House, a new church plant in Salisbury, North Carolina.





THE **musts** OF **multiplication**

Multiplying disciples and multiplying churches are inseparable.

We must multiply churches that make disciples. **The North American “Gospel Gap” won’t be closed by new churches only experiencing transfer growth.**

We must multiply disciples that lead to new churches—the church is not a humanly originated institution, but the bride and body of Christ. The New Testament is full of stories of newly established local churches transforming lives and communities through the hope and holiness of Jesus Christ.

My travels have been full of interactions with leaders who have a “sending” vision. Among them was ALIVE Church (Central, South Carolina) when their lay and pastoral leaders gathered as Pastor Tom Harding cast a fresh vision. Still passionate about reaching the 96,000 in their immediate ZIP codes, ALIVE Church is investing in a multigenerational kingdom force to become a movement multiplying disciples and locations in ZIP codes far and wide.

I was also with half a dozen Chesapeake District pastors who are partnering to reach their numerous ZIP codes with multiple expressions of the church. These local churches are epicenters for launching new and renewing existing churches.

Both groups provide a living example that while districts and denominations can provide vital support in planting churches, the front line is local churches multiplying themselves.

As Rick Warren, pastor and author, says, “The greatness of a church is not its *seating* capacity, but its *sending* capacity.”

We celebrate every time a disciple makes a disciple and the church multiplies itself until The Wesleyan Church has a transforming presence in every ZIP code.

I pray daily over multiplication visions given to me by our Wesleyan pastors, no matter the size of their churches.

It’s a great way to start the day! ✌



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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Cul-ti-vate

1. *prepare and develop*
2. *foster the growth of*
3. *proliferate readily in culture*
4. *to dwell, inhabit and raise*

In 2018, Wesleyan Life will focus on church multiplication. As you read the testimonies, praises, plans and petitions, continue to pray that The Wesleyan Church will make the most of every opportunity to help the lost be Made New.

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Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send?
And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"
- Isaiah 6:8

CULTIVATE

Your Calling

**A discernment
guide for
curious leaders**

What if God could use me to start a new faith community?

I know this question may sound ridiculous, but consider this for a moment: What if God has uniquely gifted and positioned you to lead a growing group of Christ followers to continually reach people who are far from God?

When I first responded to my missional calling, I never would have imagined I would end up planting multiple churches. However, as I began to operate in my entrepreneurial wiring, spiritual gifts and leadership abilities, I quickly realized God had given me the desire and ability to start new churches.

The biblical narrative is loaded with stories of people who never would have imagined God using them in the way he did, so it's really not a surprise God would call me, or maybe even you, to shape a missional outpost that doesn't exist yet. Within the stories of Moses, Elisha, Jeremiah, Virgin Mary, Paul and Peter, one important thread is woven throughout—each was willing to obey God's voice.

If you wonder if God is calling you to start a new faith community, it is essential to enter a serious discernment process. Without divine confirmation and human affirmation, you will likely start for the wrong reasons and quit when ministry begins to feel difficult. Yet when the Holy Spirit confirms and people affirm you in your calling, you will begin to tap into a deep sense of enduring faithfulness, continuing on with grit and perseverance.

It is important to know God expresses his calling differently in every leader. Some people receive a bolt of lightning; some people receive continual and progressive nudges throughout their lifetime. Even though no calling experience is the same, there are transferable principles we can acknowledge.

The biblical narrative is loaded with stories of people who never would have imagined God using them in the way that he did.

As you consider the call to starting churches, take some time to prayerfully reflect on these concepts and questions:

Consider how God has wired you.

CATALYTIC INNOVATOR:

- Do you like to start new things?
- Does innovation inspire you?
- Do small business atmospheres motivate you?
- Do you have a history of starting new things from the ground up?
- Do others know you as a risk taker?

VISION CASTER:

- Do you dream big?
- Do people tend to follow you?
- Do you enjoy communicating what God is up to in the world?
- Does your heart break for people disconnected from Christ and the church?
- Do you enjoy developing a strategy to support your vision?
- Do you respond to challenges with solutions and get things done?

FRIENDS WITH NON-CHRISTIANS:

- Do you enjoy spending time with people who are far from God?
- Do you have non-church going friends in your cell phone contact list?
- Do you enjoy hosting events or meals with people who aren't church friends?
- Do you pray for God to use you as a light within your relationships?
- Do you pray, by name, for people who do not yet know the love of Christ?

Consider how people respond to your leadership.

- Have you developed a relationship of trust with the leadership of your church?
- Do those whom God has placed in leadership oversight of you know about your interest in starting a new kingdom project?
- Do you submit well to the leaders God has placed in your life?
- Are you open to going wherever God may call you?
- Do you get the sense others might follow you wherever you go?
- Do people tend to enjoy being around you and your ministry culture?
- Do people come to you and ask questions about life and God?
- Does God regularly use you to bring about change in the lives of others?
- Have you led people to Jesus outside of a church setting?



Consider the perpetual passion of your heart.

- Do you believe the good news of Jesus changes lives?
- Do you love seeing people put their faith in Christ and be baptized?
- Do you love being transformed by Jesus?
- Do you love learning more and more about the Bible?
- Do you have a spiritual boldness?
- Do you daydream about fresh ways to express God's purposes in the world?

These three principles and questions related to your wiring, people's response to your leadership and your involvement with non-Christians may not be a complete checklist for sensing a call to church planting.

But your responses can serve as a conversation starter to express the desires of your heart to your spouse, best friend, pastor or district superintendent. If you feel as if God is beginning to confirm a church planting calling on your life, then proceed with humble confidence, knowing that with God all things are possible (Matthew 19:26).

 wes.life/assessment

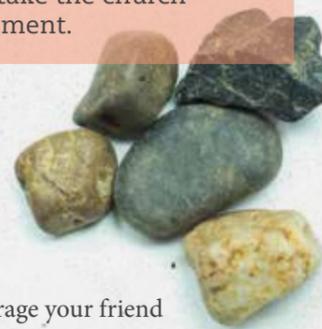
If you feel led to discover more about your church planting wiring, one next step is to take the church planters pre-assessment.

Even if you do not feel led to take a next step, maybe you know someone who should. Consider sharing this article and encourage your friend in his or her unique calling.

May you discover the great joy of being a multiplier in God's kingdom. 



DR. ED LOVE is director of Church Multiplication for The Wesleyan Church.



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REACHING OUT & BUILDING UP



BY TRICIA RIFE

“What am I doing here?” thought Arlynn (pronounced “Ar-leene”) Ellis, as she sat at a table with fellow nonprofit executives in 2014.

Not that she didn’t love her job. She did, but yearned for more. Ellis wanted to help others in a ministry setting and mix her expertise of the nonprofit world and providing programs.

Ellis and her husband, Rev. Robert (Bob) Ellis, had co-planted Crossroads Church, a multiethnic congregation in San Antonio, Texas, in 2001. Bob was the pastor and although Arlynn was serving in the church, she felt led to serve in a different capacity.

The couple began praying. In 2015, Acts of Hope Center (AHC) was born for “the sole purpose of applying

contemporary evidence-based solutions to some of the most troubling problems of our time.” A nonprofit organization connected to (but separate from) Crossroads, AHC provides programs and support in community health, education and job training for families in need.

AHC serves families by meeting basic needs like food, clothing, diapers and wipes. This is the initial connection point. Once Ellis and her team get to know the families, they determine ways in which they can serve to add more value to their lives. Single moms, as young as age 12, arrive for diapers and often end up attending parenting classes, as do single dads whose needs may look different from single moms.

Acts of Hope Center has added more focus to outreach and where we were once invisible to the community, we are now seen.

Ellis tells of an instance when she noticed a group of teens playing basketball on the church property during school hours. She learned they’d dropped out of school, so she launched GED classes. Since San Antonio has a high rate of obesity and diabetes, AHC offers diabetes education classes, as well as general classes on nutrition and meal preparation.

A discipleship program for Christ followers is also available.

“We want to bring people to Christ,” said Ellis. “People start becoming more receptive [to the gospel] when we begin meeting needs.”

AHC is changing lives in the community and church. People are being introduced to and attending Crossroads through AHC and regular attendees at Crossroads are being transformed because of their involvement with AHC.

Laypersons are becoming church leaders. Ellis describes this as an “awakening” as faithful congregants



Learn more about Acts of Hope Center actsofhopecenter.org

exhibit excitement at serving and make new commitments to their own discipleship process. A handful of Crossroads laypersons assisted in Hurricane Harvey relief efforts last August.

“Acts of Hope Center has added more focus to outreach and where we were once invisible to the community, we are now seen,” said Rev. Bob Ellis.

AHC’s vision is to empower individuals and families to better their circumstances.

San Antonio, the second most populous city in Texas, is taking note. AHC is recognized across the city partnering with several area nonprofits, businesses and city government officials. AHC joined other faith-based organizations supporting the city. Ellis reports San Antonio is one of two cities in the country that has hired a reverend as an official city employee.

Local schools also benefit from AHC’s presence. Ellis serves on the PTA

(Parent Teacher Association) board of the local elementary school. Because she knows school officials personally, ministry opportunities continue to increase.

As these serving opportunities present themselves, Ellis keeps AHC’s vision in mind: to empower individuals and families to better their circumstances, rather than foster a dependence on AHC that cripples families long term.

“We want to get to the root of the problem and find out what is causing the hardships,” said Ellis. “We don’t want to create a plan where people are dependent on us.”

She tells the story of one family who regularly visited AHC for food. She and the parents worked on a three-month plan that included helping the husband write a résumé and job interview preparation. He started working a part-time job and later transitioned into working full time. That family is now giving back and helping others in need.

Ellis’ greater vision includes opening other AHC locations and planting more churches across South Texas, including Rockport, where Hurricane Harvey was especially devastating.

“This is the most fulfilling work I’ve ever known,” Ellis said. “We are about touching lives and doing church multiplication. This is our dream.” 🌿





“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.”

PSALM 42:1

Today, “We have a beautiful mix of Haitians, Caribbean blacks and Russian Anglos who meet Sunday after Sunday and ministry is taking place on a daily basis,” said Graham. This is not your typical makeup of a multiethnic ministry, which makes it even more beautiful.

Stories of lives being made new through this ministry are beginning to accumulate. Jackie is just one person at NHFWC who has surrendered her life to Christ.

“She had been engaged in the things of the world at an early age,” said Graham. “Then one Sunday morning she heard the gospel and surrendered her life.”

Since that morning, Jackie’s life has been transformed and the impact of her salvation is affecting others, including her children and family she brings to church.

Now Jackie, her family and others in Coney Island have this same thirst for Christ—one that’s satisfied by drawing closer to Christ through consistent prayer, intentional evangelism and continual discipleship.

“I just could not shake the question.”

This is what Dr. Anthony Graham said after sharing what the Lord asked him years ago. Graham went on to say, “That was a turning point in my life.”

At the time, the church he pastors, New Hope Family Worship Center (NHFWC) in Brooklyn, New York, was doing well. It was growing and more than 100 people had placed their faith in Jesus that year. Yet every time he prayed, that question came up: “What are you thirsty for?”

Graham was guided to Psalm 42:1 and realized the importance of a consistent and continual thirst for Christ: “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.”

This same thirst is evident at NHFWC and is lived out daily in prayer, evangelism and discipleship in the church of more than 1,000 attendees.

Hurricane Sandy devastated Coney Island in 2012, and a Wesleyan church disbanded due to the destruction. After the Penn-Jersey District leadership worked to restore the building where the disbanded church had met, Graham and NHFWC were offered its use for their ministry.

What are you thirsty for?



JACKIE BLEDSOE
is digital resource coordinator for Church Multiplication and Discipleship.

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Planting on purpose

Church multiplication is of high value as The Wesleyan Church seeks to have a transforming presence in every ZIP code. Following are accounts from a seasoned church planter and one new to the endeavor.

WAYNE & AMY OTTO

Pastor Wayne Otto's heartbeat is to make disciples and raise up other leaders to do the same. As a result, new churches have sprouted wherever his family has felt called to go. Otto and his wife, Amy, have planted new congregations for over 20 years. Their present calling is at Providence Wesleyan Church in the Charleston, South Carolina, area.

LEARN MORE providencewesleyanchurch.com

"Changed lives are our measurement."

"Growth is not without struggle, but difficult is not our measurement," said Otto. "Changed lives are our measurement."

Is there a specific key value to build into a church's DNA early on?

The idea of a "go and tell" versus a "come and see" church in order to reach the unchurched. Planting is a part of the outflow of a normal witness (e.g. Peter after Pentecost, Phillip and the Ethiopian and Paul's four missionary journeys that resulted in churches being planted all throughout Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, Asia Minor, Rome and Europe). I want people to see and experience the power of one witness.

What are your top three focus areas when you first move to a new location to plant?

Reach unchurched people. Saturate the community with news of the new plant. Ask God to send workers who will be on mission.

Who do you talk to on a discouraging day in ministry?

Nobody. The worst part of my pathology (I use that word intentionally because I am pretty self-aware of how I'm wired) is I am alone too often. My fears, frustrations and disappointments are left between me and God. I do talk to Amy, and she is a huge support.

How has planting affected your family?

Positive. Positive. Positive. Three children, all love Jesus; two are in ministry and it wouldn't surprise me if the third ends up in ministry too. My daughter and son-in-law are one of the couples who will be planting out of Providence.

Can you share your greatest faith risk?

Moving 1,000 miles away to plant with zero people in an area (the South) that is so different than where we spent the first season of our life in the North. Then buying property and getting a mortgage of a million dollars when you have no people. Then trying not only to gather people, but have them take ownership of a debt that they

didn't go through the process of dreaming about and praying for and sacrificing to make happen. We are almost there.

How can we pray for you?

We are in an exciting season of change and birth. Pray for a harvest of souls, people of peace and for God to rain down his favor and power on the South Carolina Lowcountry region. Our vision is to reach 10,000 people by planting 50 new churches in the Lowcountry.

LEARN MORE unitedcitygo.com



SPENCER & JORDAN LOMAN

As college students, Spencer and Jordan Loman went "all in" when they realized their church planting call. Their first new church, United City Greensboro, Greensboro, North Carolina, launched September 10, 2017.

How did God prepare your heart for planting a church?

Church planting was in my blood. When I (Spencer) was six, my dad moved our family to Wilmington, North Carolina, to plant North Pointe Community. Once I got to Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion, Indiana, I began to realize God had wired me with an entrepreneurial spirit, a desire to create and an overall sense of intrigue in new church work. It was an actual calling to step into the unknown and plant a gospel-centered community in an urban context.

What has surprised you about planting a church?

The most surprising thing is the amount of intricate details that go into actually planting a church. Everything from budget building, to understanding what type of space you can and cannot meet in, to assimilation. Also, I didn't realize the importance of being intentional about everything you do relationally. Intentionality in relationships has been critical.

Have you faced any challenges in your first year of planting?

We have faced numerous challenges. Early on I felt the biggest one was to get people to shoulder the burden for the city with us. It requires constant vision casting and dreaming to begin to see a shift in culture. Also, being a bi-vocational church planter, managing time has been a challenge.

Is there a specific value that is key to build into a church's DNA early on?

The one thing that affects all things micro is culture—the set of values a group of people holds to. If you don't understand how important and valuable culture is to your community, you won't be able to have any values in the DNA. I feel often we jump directly to strategy and negate culture or see it as secondary. That is false. Culture is the single most important element in a community aside from the Holy Spirit. Certain things don't fit our culture, so we don't do those things even though strategically they make sense. Culture impacts the long term; strategy impacts the short term.

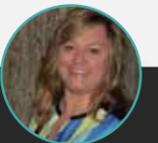
How do you train people on your team to share their faith with others?

Stories. I believe Christ followers should be the greatest story collectors and storytellers on earth. When we hear others' stories, we usually can find at least one aspect that resonates with ours. When that takes place, it creates a point of relatability. When we find relatability, we then are at the final step before we can share how Christ has transformed our lives.

"I believe Christ followers should be the greatest story collectors and storytellers on earth."

How can we pray for you?

Pray that I can have continual and fresh revelation of God's love for me as a child and not as a pastor. Pray that I love my wife in humility and self-sacrifice. Pray that United City would not simply grow to be a large church, but a church that impacts the culture of Greensboro. 🙌



SARAH COCHRAN
pastors alongside her husband, Tom, at Expansion Church in Chesterton, Indiana.



**FORCED OUT,
SENT OUT.**

“Plant or die.”

These words are a mantra for Wesleyans in New Zealand.



Fresh start

“Movement momentum alone requires we keep planting,” said Rev. Brett Jones, assistant national superintendent of church development for the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand (WMCNZ). Jones focuses on church planting, church health and leadership development. He is also founding pastor of **cession | community** launched from **East City Wesleyan (ECW)**, Botany.

ECW is jokingly referred to as an “involuntary church plant.” ECW founding pastor and WMCNZ national superintendent, Dr. Richard Waugh, describes the history of his “involuntary church plant” in his article, “Planting a Church Planting Denomination.”

Reality for evangelical “Wesleyans” in New Zealand shifted dramatically in 1999-2000. Tumultuous changes took place in The Methodist Church of New Zealand.

Due to controversial policy decisions catalyzed by compromises on biblical authority, evangelical Wesleyans felt forced out of their beloved denomination. Evangelical congregations lost their church properties, and pastors lost their salaries and retirements. However, God’s Spirit would transform a people forced out into a people sent out.

In 2000, five ordained ministers and five congregations of this ostracized evangelical group formed The Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand (WMCNZ) as an indigenous church. It joined The International Wesleyan Church through a mission field partnership with the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia.

From 2003-2008, the West Michigan District committed to partner with WMCNZ, and the vibrant church planting culture of this district strongly influenced WMCNZ through invaluable relationships, as well as ideological and financial resources.



New wave

WMCNZ cultivates its multiplication culture through annual celebrations of new church plants. The movement has expanded to 28 local churches. Church multiplication is prioritized on a structural level, and prayers for future plants are poured over strategic cities such as Wellington and Tauranga. These strategic plants require international partnerships, particularly in funding initial launches. For example, **The Well** in Christchurch of the South Island is led by Clint Ussher. Ussher and his wife, Jamie, and two daughters moved to New Zealand in 2012 to plant a church, with incredible financial support. Initially meeting in homes and a school hall, The Well dedicated its own building in 2017 with a desire to eventually send out more church planters for the South Island.

Frank Ritchie experienced a call to ministry while attending cession | community and was ordained in 2012. He explored pastoring an existing WMCNZ church but the limited options in a young movement combined with the unique sort of church he felt called to pastor, made this unlikely. Feeling “forced out” of existing church paradigms, God relocated Ritchie and his family to Hamilton in 2017 to plant **Commoners Wesleyan Community**.

Offering contemplative and discussion oriented services, Commoners provides a place of quiet exploration of faith in a noisy culture.

Rising property prices in Auckland, New Zealand’s largest city, cause many

Watch video
wes.life/thewellnz





Wesleyans to consider moving elsewhere. Having experienced life in a church plant firsthand, these Wesleyans understand being “forced out and sent out.” Loyalty to the Wesleyan ethos is strong, so rather than finding a new church, these expats take WMCNZ with them.

Shore Grace, a strategic church plant on the North Shore of Auckland, ministered to a growing group of families who had moved 20 kilometers away to Millwater. This small group started a Sunday evening Bible study in a local school hall. Meanwhile in South Africa, Rev. Dr. John Bailie had been called to plant a church. Bailie stumbled across the WMCNZ website “by accident,” and he and his family moved to New Zealand in 2015.

Millwater Wesleyan Church immediately started Sunday morning services with Bailie as their pastor. In

June of 2017, WMCNZ celebrated its newest and most northern church plant in Whangarei, started by an expat pastor, Rev. Julia Vincent, and her husband.

Our future

Looking to the future, WMCNZ faces the challenge of reaching a third culture mission field. In New Zealand’s multicultural context, the second and third generation children of migrant families have a unique culture. Since many third culture Wesleyans of the next generation may feel forced out of their parents’ monoethnic churches, the movement hopes to send them out as church planters to reach the next generation.

HOPE for the future is strong for Wesleyans in New Zealand, where a people forced out become a people sent out.

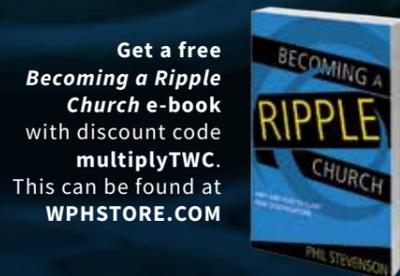


AMBER LIVERMORE
Rev. Amber Livermore is the lead pastor of Grace Fellowship Church in Princeton, Indiana.



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Planting Continues

Steve Hubbard, lead pastor of Awaken Church



"We are a church



that *joyfully*



gives ourselves away."

BY KATIE LONG

Awaken Church's (Grand Ledge, Michigan) mission has been clear since its launch in late 2016: "We are a church that joyfully gives ourselves away."

Originally planted from Epic Community Church in Portland, Michigan, Awaken started with a core group of pioneers who were ready to see the community of Grand Ledge come alive. Steve Hubbard has led the way, providing a space for the community to be part of a bigger story by being tuned in to their ZIP code and sharing life together. He and his family fell in love with the community before they planted Awaken, embracing the opportunities of bumping into people from different walks of life, thoughts and values.

As Hubbard shared his heart with Epic leaders, the church began to catch the vision as well. Epic pastor, Duane Bower, knew Awaken was something they had to invest in.

There is nothing more beautiful than a church who has *planted themselves into the life and heartbeat* of the people God's wrapped around them.

"We believed in him [Hubbard] and his vision and wanted to partner with him," Bower said. "We were already investing 10 percent of our budget in church planting. Awaken gave us the opportunity to invest our greatest resource: people."

Ten percent of Epic's congregation committed to a year of helping with the launch team, which played an integral part in developing the culture and community of Awaken.

Awaken has continued this legacy of multiplication by giving 10 percent of its offering to church planting. Funds have been given to Luis Torres, an Awaken church planting intern, who is planting his own church in Lansing, Michigan. Torres also received finances raised through the 2016 National Church Multiplication Sunday.

Hubbard believes God has all people on a mission and it is our responsibility to plant ourselves in the lives of our neighbors and neighborhoods.

"I just love when the church is planted in its ZIP code," said Hubbard. "Church planting is a very natural expression of the love of Christ at work in the world and in communities. There is nothing more beautiful than a church who has planted itself into the life and heartbeat of the people God's wrapped around it." 🙌



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Thriving Journey



“I was raised in a non-Wesleyan, legalistic church in Michigan,” said Wesleyan Pastor Dave Dahlberg. “My father was the pastor so we went to church three times a week and [nearly 10] revivals per year.”

While his background as a preacher’s kid never led him to question the reality of God, the religious setting did cause him to be “bitter, angry and hurt” as he didn’t fit in with the culture that determined hairstyles and attire.

Dahlberg’s path took a turn for the better in January of 1982 during a revival service. He and his then future wife, Kim, who had her own questions about God and religion, had a life-changing encounter with God.

“I simply asked the Lord to let me know he was still there,” said Dahlberg. “At the end of the service, the Holy Spirit began to pour over me with conviction. I stood beside Kim in the front row of the little church shaking, with tears flowing down my cheeks trying to keep it together!”

“At that very moment, there was a tug on my arm and Kim whispered in my ear, ‘Let’s go up there together!’ I fell on my knees and surrendered my life to the Lord. He completely changed my heart and life.”

After his father became ill, Dahlberg filled in for his father at the church where he grew up. He went on to be the church pastor for six years as he studied at Nazarene Bible College.

After graduation, God instructed the Dahlbergs to move on to another assignment. Dahlberg soon learned it was because God had yet another plan for him.



“God opened the door for the East Michigan District Superintendent Rev. Ken Boschee to get my number and give me a call,” Dahlberg said. “We set up a time for an interview and he asked if I would send my resume to the Wayne Wesleyan Church only a few miles away.”

He ended up pastoring Wayne Wesleyan for almost 13 years. God continued to show himself strong and called Dahlberg and his family to Christian Faith Fellowship in Tucson, Arizona, where they have been serving since 2005. Dahlberg also graduated with a Master of Divinity degree (M.Div.) from Wesley Seminary in 2015.

Along with God’s grace, Dahlberg credits the six factors of Education and Clergy Development’s Thriving Clergy initiative (spiritual, emotional, relational, intellectual, financial and physical) for his ability to fulfill his God-given purpose.

“As I reflect over the six areas of the Thriving Clergy initiative, I can see how God has used the various trainings, teachings, articles and education at Wesley Seminary and Leadership Connection to reinforce these ideals in my life with the

Holy Spirit nudging me in the specific areas he wanted me to focus on and change.”

Dahlberg used his time as an M.Div. student in his 50s as an example of how the initiative prevented him from feeling too overwhelmed when his church moved into a new campus the same year. Today, in hopes of maintaining balance, he continues to make small changes such as taking Mondays off to reflect, pray and play instead of working.

“I am very aware that God is not done challenging and changing me in every one of the six areas of the Thriving Clergy initiative,” Dahlberg said. “Kim and I have been extremely blessed to serve two of the best congregations in The Wesleyan Church that you could ever find. The journey has been amazing.”

“Our lives have continued to be changed as we further surrender to the Holy Spirit,” Dahlberg added. “During our 24 years serving The Wesleyan Church, we have been greatly impacted by various leaders, seminars, The Gathering, Refocusing, Leadership Connection and more.”

I am very aware that God is not done challenging and changing me in every one of the six areas of the Thriving Clergy initiative.

Learn more about Thriving Clergy initiative.
wes.life/thrivingclergy



CHARMAINE PATTERSON
is executive assistant to Russ Gunsalus and communications coordinator for Education and Clergy Development.


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— Pastor Jonathan Williams,
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BY TRICIA RIFE

A Holy DISTURBANCE

Wesleyan Church of Hamburg (WCH) follows an Ephesians 4 model when it comes to equipping its own for ministry. Instead of church staff being the “doers of ministry,” they are the “equippers of ministry.”



YOU HAVE TO JUMP IN AND SERVE INSTEAD OF WAITING UNTIL YOU FEEL READY.



a WCH community group of four young men who were recently baptized and are excited to grow together in their faith.

Gibson also assisted in writing a disciple-making program that is woven throughout WCH and has helped train more than 130 people in the training titled “I’m a Disciplemaker.”

Everyone, no matter what age, can disciple another. “We want everyone to become a disciple of Christ and nurture others in the process too,” said Gibson. He encourages other laypersons to begin serving in the church, even if they don’t yet know what it looks like.



Don’t wait to serve until you think you’re ready because none of the disciples were.

“You have to jump in and serve instead of waiting until you feel ready,” said Gibson. “God will provide what you need to serve and lead where he wants you. Someone needs to intersect with your life. Don’t wait to serve until you think you’re ready because none of the disciples were.”

“Bob has been launching ministries, because he knows he is fully supported by leadership,” said Rev. Ken Nash, WCH lead pastor.

Scott Shafer is another layperson at WCH who has stepped into leadership. A mechanical engineer who works full time and attends seminary simultaneously, Shafer is a lay pastor at WCH. He helped lead worship for many years at the campus he now serves, and when Nash began as lead pastor, they had a conversation about Shafer’s desire to teach.

Shafer said Nash giving him the opportunity to be part of the teaching team of pastors was “a race marker (referenced in Hebrews 12), the next step God had for me.” When Shafer took a step of faith to start seminary, he just wanted “to be a better Sunday school teacher.” But God continues to direct his steps in

an unexpected way. He sees full-time ministry as a possibility in his future. He realized he “could have a positive impact in people’s lives” and help others understand Scripture more deeply. He wants to continue walking in that direction to see where God leads.

“Scott is a major leader in our church as one of our campus pastors,” said Nash. “He’s volunteering his time.”

Gibson and Shafer aren’t the only laypersons giving their best in service at WCH.

“Our church laypeople have stepped up to serve,” said Nash. “They are leading ministries that ‘are in their hands.’ Watching them come alive in their callings is what we call a ‘holy disturbance’—their passion of what God is calling them to.”

Nash said WCH will not launch a ministry that doesn’t have an “organic, natural leader who God has raised up.” WCH leadership champions creativity and energy in its laypeople as they lead and freely lets them do so.

“The lifeblood of a movement is laity,” said Nash. “We believe that to our core.”

THE LIFE BLOOD OF A MOVEMENT IS LAITY.



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 Full story
wes.life/newweb



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New title, same passion

No matter what she's involved with as ambassador of The Wesleyan Church, Jo Anne Lyon's greatest joy is still seeing lives, churches and communities transformed because of the hope of Jesus.

 Full story
wes.life/lyonambassador



The Story of Ruth

An unexpected encounter transforms the life of a former Muslim.

 Full story
wes.life/ruth2day

First "urban missional church" approved

Norwood Wesleyan Church in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, is the first Wesleyan congregation to be designated as an urban missional church.

 Full story
wes.life/firsturban



South Dakota church "celebrates" multiple church plants

What can happen when a leader hears the voice of God? Celebrate Community Church envisions planting 50 churches over the next 10 years. Since January 1, 2016, Celebrate has seen 29 couples/individuals start the licensing/ordination journey, 29 who started education toward ministry and 17 yet to be assessed.

 Full story
wes.life/sd50in10



Houghton opens Utica extension site

Sixteen students from Burma will have the opportunity to receive a degree at Houghton College Utica (New York).

 Full story
wes.life/uticaopen

Mongolian Wesleyan pastors ordained

The Kingdom of Eternal Light Wesleyan Church of Mongolia celebrates the ordination of Pastors Naraa and Ankha.



 Full story
wes.life/mongofirst



 Full story
wes.life/hispanicgfirst

U.S. Wesleyan Hispanic Church funds first Global Partners missionary

The first Hispanic Global Partners missionary has been appointed and sent to serve among Muslim immigrants in Europe.

General Board experiences “even greater things” this session

Members of the General Board and special guests left its 136th session encouraged by what God has done and expectant of what he will do in the future.



! Full story
wes.life/general136



SWU continues to grow

For the fourth consecutive year, Southern Wesleyan University has experienced enrollment growth within its traditional program.

! Full story
wes.life/swugrow



WIWU-TV debuts “IWU Best Lecture”

New “IWU Best Lecture” series features various university faculty and topics presented in a “TED Talk” format.

! Full story
wes.life/wiwu-best



Kingswood student has front row to healings

Nathan Trouten experienced a profound work of God in his own life while ministering in NYC.

! Full story
wes.life/kwhealing

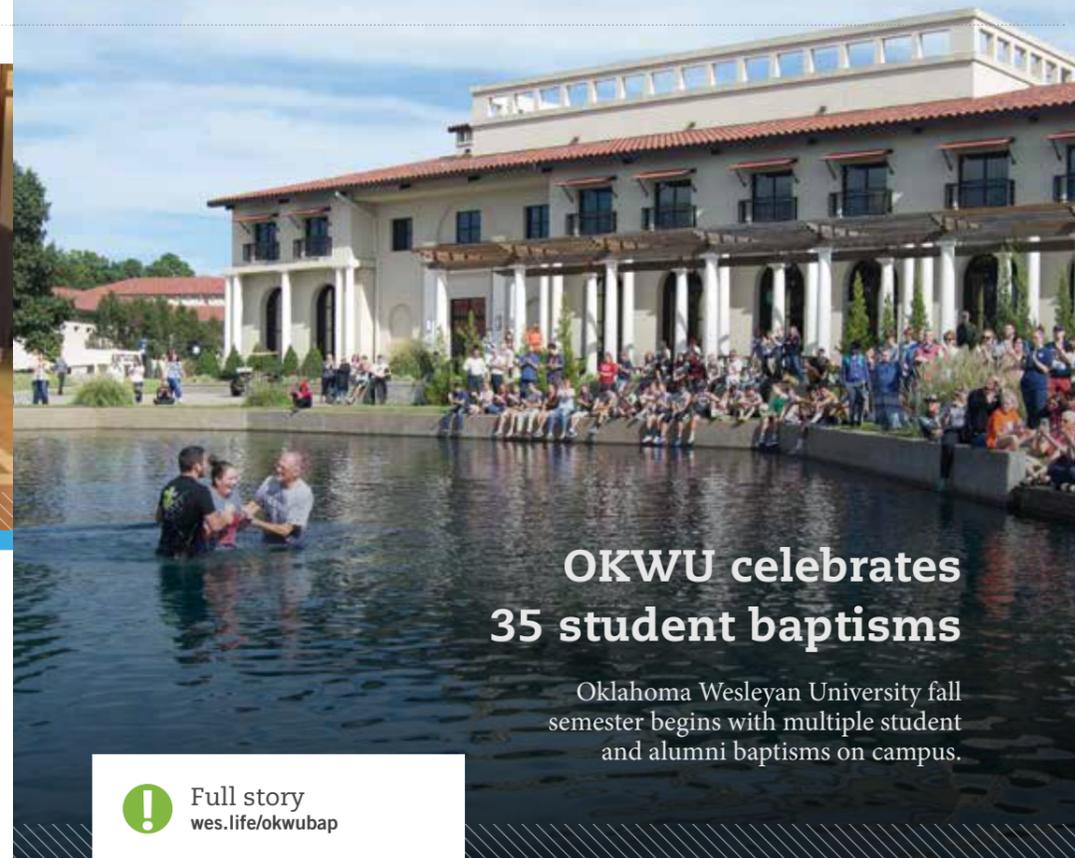


Joseph named dean at Wesley Seminary

Dr. Abson Joseph, former professor of New Testament and ancient languages at Indiana Wesleyan University's School of Theology and Ministry, is the new dean of Wesley Seminary.

! Full story
wes.life/joseph-ws

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OKWU celebrates 35 student baptisms

Oklahoma Wesleyan University fall semester begins with multiple student and alumni baptisms on campus.

! Full story
wes.life/okwubap

Remembered

REV. BOB ANDERSON (89) died October 28. He pastored churches in Indiana. His wife, Virginia, survives.

PASTOR STEPHEN BROWN (63) died September 5. He served as visitation pastor at Bales Wesleyan Church in Jamestown, North Carolina. His wife, Daisy, survives.

REV. DAVID CRAIL (90) died November 24. He pastored churches in Illinois and Wisconsin. His wife, Margaret, preceded him in death.

REV. JAMES DENNY (90) died October 28. He served as a pastor in North Carolina, as well as an assistant district superintendent. His wife, Rachele, survives.

DARL FOWLER, SR. (83) died August 31. He served as a member of the General Board of The Wesleyan Church from 1996 to 2004. His wife, Mary, preceded him in death.

REV. LYLE GEIST (73) died October 7. He pastored churches in Alabama and North Carolina. His wife, Carolyn, survives.

REV. OLEN HIGHTOWER (80) died October 5. He pastored churches in the South Carolina District. His wife, Barbara, survives.

REV. JAMES MELVIN HOWARD (87) died November 14. He pastored churches in North Carolina and served as a district evangelist. His first wife, Fayedean, preceded him in death. His wife, Lucy, survives.

REV. RUSSELL RODRIGUEZ (86) died September 30. He pastored churches in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi. His wife, Earlene, survives.

REV. THOMAS “GENE” SCHENCK (90) died October 12. He pastored churches in Florida, Indiana, North Carolina and Ohio. His first wife, Thelma, preceded him in death. His wife, Tula, survives.

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