

wesleyan life

THE **MAGAZINE** OF THE WESLEYAN CHURCH



ROSS HOFFMAN'S LEGACY

A Simple Life

HOW GOD CALLS

Every Person

LOVE IN ACTION

The Atlantic



THE CALL TO SIMPLICITY

ROSS HOFFMAN was the owner of a small business in our community. He grew up in the church and considered himself a Christian all of his life. He'd answered the first call to become Christ's disciple, but still **HE WONDERED IF THERE WAS MORE TO BEING A CHRISTIAN THAN JUST GOING TO CHURCH.**

Then he received another call—the call to simplicity. He said it was the combination of three things. The first was his decision to read through the Bible in one year, something he'd never done, and he still doesn't know what motivated him to do it. The second was that he started to hear things in the preacher's sermons he had never heard before. But the defining moment came when he took a mission trip to Zambia. At first, he noticed the abject poverty that everyone notices, but then he saw something else.

"These people were happy and so devout even though they had nothing," he said. I wondered how they did it. They had more of God, yet they had less of everything else. Perhaps there was a correlation." I remember the day he stood in the middle aisle after a service, waving his arms and saying, "There's a whole new economy, Steve."

"There are things we value on earth that are not valuable in heaven, and there are things that are valuable in heaven that we do not value on earth."

So Ross implemented a new vision for his company. He established a new set

of values, which he posted on the wall by the break room: "Serve others, not yourself! Be 100 percent reliable and on time. Treat others the way you want to be treated." He created three new positions for people who had just been released from prison. "It's a lot of work to keep them in line," he said, "but they need a chance." He started writing prayers to send to Christian leaders every Monday and set his computer to remind him every morning that it was time to pray for his staff. He gathered fifteen people into his home one night and raised \$75,000, then used the money to buy a well-drilling rig in Zambia, which has already provided clean water for 50,000 people.

But Ross never left his business. One afternoon, while Ross and I were fishing in the Colorado River, I asked him why he never pursued a call to full-time ministry. He laughed and said, "Because I already have one." And he was right.


ROSS'S CALL WAS NOT TO CHANGE HIS OCCUPATION, BUT HIS PREOCCUPATION.

He was using his business as a front to do what he really wanted to do, and that was to fish for people.

[Excerpt from *Faultlines: challenges that transform your soul* by Steve DeNeff. Wesleyan Publishing House, 2014.]

On August 7, 2013, Ross suffered a tragic and untimely death in a construction accident at home. But many remember his legacy. His son Logan, a church-planting missionary in New Zealand, writes: "Many Christians know what it looks like to be spiritual in church, while reading their Bible, or while praying. Dad figured out how to infuse his faith into every area of his life. I watched as God transformed the various spheres of his life: his business, relationships, finances, everything. The church needs more of his brand of faith, lived in the ins and outs of everyday life."



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

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The Teachers' LOUNGE

When I finished college, I started out as an elementary school teacher, and I was excited about my first assignment. I was full of idealized visions of impacting students. The practice of all the teachers was to gather in the teachers' lounge every morning before school. This was not a formal meeting, but all kinds of conversations took place. *After a few weeks, I realized that when I left the teachers' lounge I barely had any energy left.* The conversations were full of such topics as:

- how bad the kids were
- how inept the administration was
- how crazy the world was
- how impossible it was to teach
- how we all ought to do something else
- how underpaid we were
- comparing our school district to one that was much better


After months of this talk, my disillusionment with the teaching profession, and my ineffectiveness in the classroom, I wondered if anyone else felt the same way. I was edgy about what I should do since I was really the "new kid on the block."



Finally one morning I got the courage to ask a fellow teacher if she would be interested in meeting elsewhere just to exchange some positive thoughts. Her eyes lit up and she said, "Could that also include a prayer or two?" My heart leapt within me. "Of course,"

I said. "Well, I know several who would be interested," and she started naming other colleagues that would join us. And they did.

It was amazing what happened in that new group. Lives that were broken began to vibrate with new hope. *People who had never prayed much in their lives had new courage to pray.* All of us began to look at the students with new eyes. Creative energy began to flow through our teaching. We found a new love for the students and rediscovered the joy of teaching. This was reflected in the students, too.

Jesus helps us see the world with his eyes. Thus, we are never the same, nor are the people with whom we associate. 

For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

- Matthew 18:20



JO ANNE LYON

General Superintendent
The Wesleyan Church



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JORDAN BROWN
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One recognizes when a person is gifted at taking a room full of people of different generations and forming them into the body of Christ, unified in unfettered worship. At the Gathering in Orlando, Fla., we witnessed such a worship leader, Jordan Brown.



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↑ TOP

10

Reasons why the Church is STILL the hope of the world

10. It's the largest volunteer base in the world: people who work for free usually work harder.
9. It shows compassion for the least of these: it takes more than money; it takes people and God's love to change lives.
8. It changes people's lives: it still deals with the most fundamental problem of humanity (sin).
7. It causes civilizations to flourish: hospitals and universities, charities and community centers (YMCA), nursing homes, and elementary schools ALL originated with the Church.
6. It liberates captives: the freeing of slaves, the liberation of women, the relief for the poor, and the legalization of immigrants are ALL rooted in the Church's mission to set captives free.
5. It preserves orthodoxy: we become what we worship and the Church regulates our worship.
4. It strengthens community life: it turns strangers into family and provides a structure for belonging.
3. It is the most generous community: our members contribute more to charity, than all other organizations on the planet put together.
2. It is our only chance at true diversity: diversity is a theological argument, before it's a legal or political argument.
1. Jesus is partial to us: you can't love Jesus and hate his "bride."

THINGS you never hear in church

10. Nothing inspires me like our annual stewardship campaign!
9. I was so moved, I didn't notice your sermon went 25 minutes over time.
8. You know, I find witnessing more fun than golf.
7. We are going to give our church the money I've been sending to TV evangelists.
6. I volunteer to be the permanent teacher for the junior high boys' class.
5. Let's pay our pastor so he can live like we do.
4. I love it most when we sing songs I've never heard before.
3. Everyone is here! Let's start the service early.
2. Let's send the pastor to the Bible conference in the Bahamas.
1. Hey! It's my turn to sit in the front pew!

By Jeremy Geerdes & Steve DeNeff



Excuses actually given for missing church

10. Stayed up too late Saturday.
9. Drank too much.
8. Didn't sleep well . . . Friday night.
7. Didn't have any clean clothes to wear.
6. Went to another church we're thinking about joining.
5. Today is Sanctity of Life Sunday, and I knew you would talk about how abortion is a sin, but I don't think it is.
4. Not enough gas to get there.
3. My hemorrhoids flared up really bad.
2. I was "spending time" with my spouse.
1. Some of the best TV news shows are on Sunday morning.

30 Days with Jesus Reading Plan

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Hey, you! Tear me out or take a picture.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Jesus foretold
Isaiah 53 | 16 Teachings & parables
Matthew 17:24–18:20 |
| 2 The birth of Jesus
Matthew 1:18–25 | 17 Teachings & parables
Matthew 18:21–19:15 |
| 3 John the Baptist prepares the way
Matthew 3:1–4:11 | 18 The rich young ruler
Mark 10:17–31 |
| 4 Water to wine & Samaritan woman
John 2:1–11; John 4:1–26 | 19 Disciples sent out
Luke 10:1–24 |
| 5 Jesus rejected in his hometown
Luke 4:14–30 | 20 The Good Samaritan
Luke 10:25–37 |
| 6 Jesus calls his disciples
Luke 5:1–11; Matthew 9:9–13 | 21 Jesus teaches how to pray
Luke 11:1–13 |
| 7 Sermon on the Mount
Luke 6:17–46 | 22 Jesus revives Lazarus
John 11:1–44 |
| 8 A centurion, a widow's son, & a sinful woman
Matthew 8:1–13; Luke 7:11–17; 7:36–50 | 23 Jesus comes to Jerusalem
Matthew 21:1–27 |
| 9 Encounters with the Pharisees
Matthew 12:1–13; 22–45 | 24 The Last Supper
John 13:1–17; Matthew 26:17–35 |
| 10 Parable of the sower, weeds, & seeds
Matthew 13:1–43 | 25 Comfort for the disciples
John 14–15 |
| 11 Jesus calms the storm & later walks on water
Luke 8:22–25; Mark 6:45–56 | 26 Jesus arrested & disowned
Matthew 26:36–75 |
| 12 Jesus heals a man, woman, & girl
Mark 5:1–43 | 27 Jesus' trial
John 18:19–19:16 |
| 13 Feeding of the 5,000
John 6:1–14 | 28 Jesus' Crucifixion & death
John 19:17–42 |
| 14 Peter identifies the Christ & the Transfiguration
Luke 9:18–27; Luke 17:1–8 | 29 Jesus' Resurrection & appearances
John 20–21 |
| 15 Healing by faith
Mark 9: 14–32 | 30 The Great Commission & the Ascension of Jesus
Matthew 28:16–20; Luke 24:50–53 |

IS GOD SPEAKING?

By Jane Rubietta

The whole idea of God calling us forces questions and offers few definite answers. What if we don't hear the call? Or don't recognize it? What if we can't answer with yes? Or don't want to?

What if God calls us to do something dreadfully difficult,

or something that doesn't line up with our current lifestyle? What if God's call embarrasses us, or people don't confirm that call on our lives? What if people shake their heads, like, "I'm sorry you're off the beam and are probably going to fail"? And what if we truly do fail?

Plus, don't we secretly believe that God only calls people who are super godly? Or, maybe we aren't sure that God actually still calls people today. Is that a literal voice or an internal sense, or are they just singing some loony tunes and in need of some meds?

But the intriguing part is the "what if." What if this call is real and God really antes up and moves and blesses? It's beyond anything we can imagine. And that's why yes is such a powerful response. People sometimes say to me, "People hope for their entire lives to hear God's call and to do what God calls them to do. You have found it and are doing it, and God is blessing us because of it."

So how do we move to that place?

How about a simple prayer: "God, please bless me and allow me to be a blessing. Today." And tomorrow. And the rest of our lives. And then we watch for opportunities to live into that calling. 🙌

[Excerpt from *Finding Your Promise* by Jane Rubietta.
Used by permission, Wesleyan Publishing House.]

John Wesley on



PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

Some Christians struggle over the verse "pray without ceasing" [1 Thess 5:17]. John Wesley's comments suggest that the loving attitude of our heart toward God and others can fulfill this command.

Whether we think of, or speak to, God, whether we act or suffer for him, all is prayer, when we have no other object than his love, and the desire of pleasing him.

Prayer continues in the desire of the heart, though the understanding be employed on outward things.

In souls filled with love, the desire to please God is a continual prayer.

From A Plain Account of Christian Perfection


A low-angle, upward-looking photograph of two students in a laboratory setting. They are wearing white lab coats and safety goggles. The student in the foreground is wearing clear goggles, while the student behind them is wearing yellow goggles. They are both looking upwards with expressions of focus and interest. In the background, there is a piece of laboratory equipment with a blue component. The entire image has a blue color overlay.

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Worth the Cost

BY JEREMY SUMMERS

God is ready to continually pour grace into our lives to help us grow into the people we are created to be. There's a cost to discipleship. And it's worth it.

I remember it like it was yesterday. Andrea woke me from a dead sleep and told me it was time. Excited, anxious, and afraid, we checked into the maternity ward at the hospital. Determined to begin parenthood on the right foot, I put into action everything our birthing coach had taught: the breathing, the comforting, the encouragement, massaging her shoulders, feeding her ice chips, but all the while feeling completely helpless. It was heartrending for me, watching Andrea go through so much pain. Ice chips felt like hollow help when she was doing the hardest thing her body had ever been asked to do. She turned to me and whispered, "I don't think I can do this." And, while I tried to reassure her that she could, I thought, "I will never let Andrea put herself through this again."

Why would anyone do this?

A little later, my wife answered that question with the look in her eyes when she held our baby for the first time. As time went by, the pain of the delivery room shrank in comparison to the thousands of moments when we were able to teach our child to read, pray, play the piano, throw a football. Sending her off to kindergarten, being there when she chose Jesus, and one day walking her down the aisle: these are the reasons we go through the pain. In ways

"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

I couldn't even understand at that moment, my life was changed forever in that gift of new life.

I've found myself asking a similar question about the hard process of spiritual formation: why would anyone do this? Not unlike childbirth, growing in Christ is costly, risky, pain-filled, and difficult. It's difficult for everyone, young people and adults. But the spiritual intimacy with God and the loving connections with others will outweigh the fear and difficulties many times over.

Paul, in Romans 8, speaks with a poet's vision. He was writing to a people who experienced persecution and oppression. They might have asked, "Why would anyone do this?" Paul answered, "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us" (vs.18). He compared it to giving birth, saying that all of creation is groaning, as if in the pains of childbirth, to be reborn, redeemed, restored, and made new. Paul is referring to the adventure of following Christ that requires risk, pain, difficulty, and, at times, great cost. Yet through Jesus we can have new life.

Caught up in what God is doing

This brings fully before us the picture of salvation as beginning to live a life that is caught up in what God is doing. It is a life in which "... God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (vs.28). It is a life that already has victory over death. Paul promises that we can actually experience and

know God: his grace, his love, his transforming power, right here and now (ch.10).

The moment I learned we were expecting a child, I was changed. That changed my identity, my priorities, my view of the world, the way I loved. Even though my daughter Macy was not yet in my

daily life, she had already changed me. I couldn't touch her face yet, hear her cry, or see her smile, but I still knew she was very real and present. She had an effect on me, because I was part of a new, profound reality.

When we become followers of Christ, it changes us. It changes our identity, our priorities, our view of the world, the way we love. We are forever changed, because of a new, profound reality in our lives. When we acknowledge and willingly commit ourselves to the way of Jesus Christ, this is what we call salvation. However, being saved is not the finished product, it is just the beginning of our journey with Christ. Jesus loves us completely. He wants to form us into who we were made to be. And that will make us more like Christ himself. This developmental process gives rise to new emotions, produces a new character. Our lives are being made new into the beautiful creations that God intends.

As my child grew, I grew, too, in my ability to love, to have compassion, to give without expecting anything in return. These qualities grew incrementally so that I hardly noticed. But there were moments that stand out. One time, at three years, Ava wanted to show her distracted daddy how high she could jump. She put one little hand on either side of my face and turned me forcefully toward her as she said, "Daddy, listen to me with your eyes." Moments like this have





shaped me into a different father. When I first held her, I promised her everything. But I wasn't capable of loving her the way I do now.

As we follow Jesus, we grow in our ability to act selflessly, to have compassion, to make tough decisions, to give without expecting anything in return. These things grow incrementally and often with difficulty, risk, and pain as we encounter the challenges of life. In the new life of salvation, God doesn't just save us from our sins, but patiently works to make us into new beings.

Christ won't leave us in an infant stage of spiritual growth; he continues to transform our inward being and outward actions, but only as we allow that to happen by obeying the Spirit. As we work with the Spirit of God through such things as prayer, reading the Scriptures, worship, solitude, giving, and serving, he begins to transform our pains, struggles, and habitual actions. These efforts, what some call spiritual disciplines, are not a substitute for God's grace (his gift to us), but are containers to receive it. Grace

is God acting in our lives to enable us to do what we cannot do on our own. As we grow, we become disciples of Jesus by learning what Jesus did, how he loved, how he followed the ways of the Father, and becoming more like him.

On one occasion, I was about to preach to a few hundred people. Andrea called from the other end of the country to tell me she was having a miscarriage. Pregnant with twins, one baby's life had ended while the other's heart was beating strong. I found myself preaching from John chapter 15 with a new brokenness and passion that evening, proclaiming the message to "remain in Christ" for myself more than anyone.

Apart from Christ we can do nothing

At his last supper, saying goodbye to his beloved disciples and friends, Jesus told them he would send them the comforter, the Holy Spirit, who guides us into all truth. He also said, "Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine . . . I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (vs. 4, 5).

Remaining in Christ is not simply believing in him, though that is crucial. It means being in union with him, experiencing his love, joy, and peace, and sharing in his intentions and even his power to live our new lives. In a relationship, both parties must be engaged. God takes the initiative and provides the means for us to be in Christ, but it cannot happen without our response.

Why would anyone want to pay the price to develop spiritually, to be a disciple of Christ? Well, it's the victory over death and the redemption that we wait for along with all creation. But it is also the growing capacity to receive and to give his love right now.

At each one of our four babies' births, the same thing happened. Andrea turned to me and said, in the throes of labor, "I can't do this." The first time this happened, I panicked. The fourth time, I prayed. I prayed for that moment Paul tells about when it will all be worth it. There are beautiful glimpses of our "hope of glory" along the way for those who remain in Christ, growing in the transformed life, here and now! 🌿



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Massive new flooding in Mozambique claims lives and churches ↓

Pastor Tomas Liso woke during the night as flood waters entered his house. He roused his family and they escaped only to watch their home collapse a while later. Their only recourse was to climb a huge tree nearby. Astonishingly, **THEY WERE FORCED TO SPEND SIX DAYS IN THE BRANCHES OF THE TREE**, without food or clean water, before they were finally rescued and taken to a flood relief camp. They lost everything, including all their food and their gardens. Eight members of his church are known to be dead, and fourteen are still unaccounted for. In the camps there is little food and no medicines. Many have dysentery and malaria, and a lack of clean water has caused a cholera epidemic, claiming more lives.

Rev. Graca Nhathelo, National Superintendent of The Wesleyan Church in Mozambique, reports:

2,685 houses and 23 churches were destroyed in our Wesleyan family, and at least 58 of our church members are unaccounted for. Farms are under water; people are going hungry. Pray for the 160,000 people made homeless, for hundreds who have lost loved ones, and for relief to arrive quickly.

District Superintendent Rev. Raul Diolo (Central Mozambique) states:

“WE ARE EXPERIENCING THE WORST (WIDESPREAD) FLOODING I HAVE SEEN IN MY ENTIRE LIFE.”

We can make a difference and our church leaders in Mozambique know how best to respond, if only aid comes. Please help them with financial resources.



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EBOLA UPDATE ↘

THE EBOLA DISEASE OUTBREAK IS STILL ONGOING. Guinea, Liberia, and especially Sierra Leone all continue to be affected. According to the World Health Organization, “transmission remains widespread.”

World Hope International and The Wesleyan Church are still in partnership to help Ebola fighters. Ambulances purchased through financial gifts are playing a pivotal role in helping Sierra Leoneans in rural areas. “Normal” medical issues such as malaria, typhoid, and childbirth have become more problematic due to lack of medical resources in the Ebola-stricken environment. Kamakwie Hospital, our clinics, and the ambulances are saving many lives.

The need for prayer and financial gifts to help fight Ebola is still greatly needed in West Africa. Your gifts to the Wesleyan Emergency Relief Fund continue to fight this dangerous outbreak in vulnerable communities.






Story

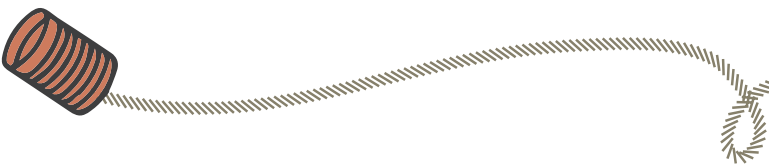
How
God
Calls

EVERY PERSON

by Steve
DeNeff



A call is a summons from God to get involved in something he is doing. Sometimes this means we do it professionally for the rest of our lives, like a minister or missionary, but more often it does not. At its core, ***the call is only a conversation God is having with us about something he is doing.*** Let's take a look at these three layers to the call.



The call to salvation

The first call is to salvation, the call to follow Jesus. The book of Isaiah has many such calls: “Come, all you who are thirsty; come to the waters . . . that you may live” (55:1, 3). When we hear the call to salvation, we hear it as something more than just the words of a preacher. The words become personal. There is someone behind them. And the action it requires is repentance.

Repentance is not as quick or as easy as some make it sound. It's not an apology or admission of guilt. It's not a promise to try harder, though we must certainly try something after we repent. Repentance is a change in the direction and course of our lives. By changing direction, we change our values. We are no longer preoccupied with the same interests. We change our way of life—the way we act, the way we treat people, the decisions we make. It takes time to work out the meaning of repentance in your life.

Recently, a man I'll call Rob was walking in front of our church when suddenly he felt compelled to go in “just to see what was happening.” A few minutes later, he was sitting in the morning service, wondering how the preacher knew so much about him. He said he thought someone had called the church and told us he was coming! At the end of the sermon, Rob came to the front and just stood there. “I need to find God,” he said, “because I've lost him.” In the last six weeks, the whole course of his life has changed. He has a long way to go, but already he's

begun talking about his experience at work. He's recruited his entire family to come with him each Sunday. He's enlisted in small groups and says he is anxious to “do something for God” with the rest of his life.

That's the way a call to salvation works. Have you had one? Do you remember feeling like God was setting you up? It probably didn't happen all at once—but there was still that moment when you first realized this was headed somewhere. For a lot of us, that's the most defining moment in our lives. How did God find me? It's that first call—the call to salvation—and we talk about it all the time . . . until we get the second.

The call to simplicity

The second call is to simplicity. Simplicity doesn't mean easy; it means a “singleness of purpose.” The call to simplicity is a call to a single focus. Once we've received a call to salvation, the direction and the course of our lives change, but things get harder and more complex, not easier. We want to follow Christ, but we have to work. We have a family. We have friends and social obligations.

The disciples are an example of this. They were in their father's boat “casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen” (Matt. 4:18).

*We change our way of life – the way we act,
the way we treat people, the decisions we make.*

"Come, follow me," Jesus said, which sounds a lot like the call to salvation, but in the next phrase, it becomes clear that Jesus meant something more: I will send you out to fish for people" (4:19). Immediately, they left their nets and followed him.

The call of Jesus to these disciples was not simply a call to follow him, but a call to "fish for people." It was the call to simplify their lives around a single purpose. He was not asking them to change their occupation. In fact, they didn't. He was calling them to change their preoccupation. Too often we confuse Jesus' call to come and follow him with the call to be saved. We put the emphasis on the initial moment when the disciple chooses to accept Christ. But after the call to follow, there is always the call to enlist. The action required is to reorient our lives around a single focus. Some people can do this and remain in their same career. Even when we keep our jobs, we do them for different reasons or, more accurately, for one reason. We "do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17 NRSV).

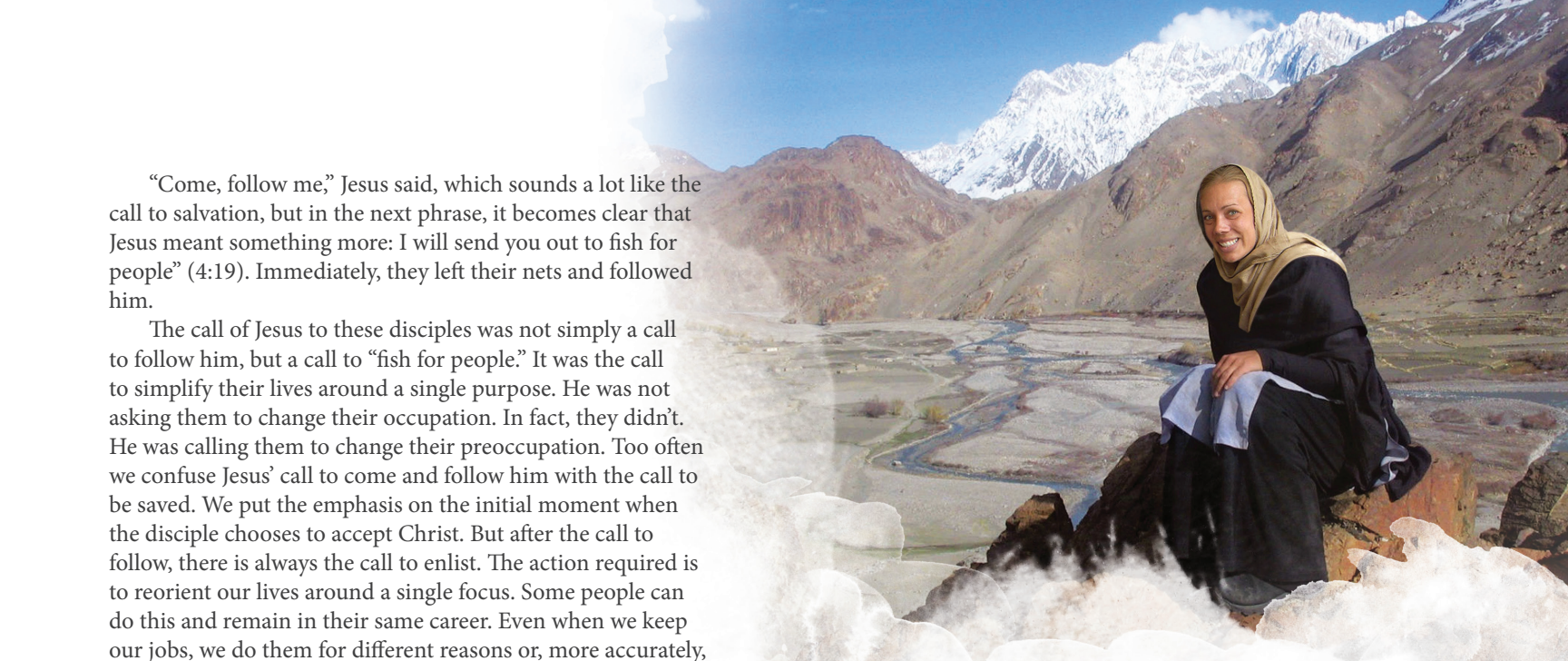
Have you heard a call to simplicity? If so, then you know how relentless it can be. But you also know that it has produced the most beautiful character in you. It has made you what you are. It's all you can talk about . . . so far! But brace yourself. You might have another call coming in.

The call to a mission

When we are called to a mission, we are summoned to one particular cause and assigned a specific task. It may seem like an extension of our call to simplicity, but there are important differences. For starters, the call to a mission may require us to change our career. It can mean a move. It can mean gaining more education, earning less money, working alone, or living in a place we're not fond of. It is a jealous and guarded friendship with God, under his anointing, while we accomplish a certain task, and then it is over. This is one of the tell-tale signs: there is a beginning and an end. People who have this call speak of being under orders or of carrying a mantle that others do not have to carry. There will come a time when the mantle is lifted and placed onto someone else—usually someone younger—but for now they must do it.

Cheryl Beckett was a nursing student at Indiana Wesleyan University who graduated with a degree in biology. Cheryl felt God calling her into humanitarian work with the poorest people of Afghanistan. For six years, she served in hospitals and clinics that treated people with eye diseases.

I want to die to myself," she wrote in her journal. "What does that look like? How do I make that tangible?" Cheryl was answering the call to a mission. On August 5, 2010, she was killed, along with nine others, when a band of terrorists attacked their vehicle while returning from serving in a clinic.



*If God has put a fire inside
you then leave what comfort
you have for whatever he has
called you to do.*

"Cheryl paid the ultimate price," said her father, Charles, "but in truth, she paid that price every day. She lived out God's Word. She adorned herself with his truth . . . She shared Christ to those who were hurting and suffering. Make no mistake about it . . . There are a host of Afghan people today who know about Jesus because, like Nicodemus, in the cover of darkness they came and they asked, 'What are you doing here?' And she told them about Jesus."

Sometimes we think of the call as a place to realize our dreams—and sometimes it is—but there are times when it can cost us our very lives.

If God has put a fire inside you—if he's asked you to join him in some cause—then leave what comfort you have for whatever he has called you to do. Don't negotiate. Don't think about how inadequate you are. And don't think that it is too late.

Those who are happiest are those who have taken the greatest risks. They stepped out into a place that was uncharted and unsafe. They didn't know how it would end. They only knew what they were supposed to do next. So whatever God has told you to do, say yes. 🙌



[Excerpted from *Faultlines: challenges that transform your soul* by **STEVE DENEFF**. Wesleyan Publishing House, 2014.]



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Story

Love in Action

BY RON MCCLUNG



An Atlantic pastor said it well:
“Because **God has blessed** us,
we want to bless you.”



→ The winds of God's favor have been blowing across the **Atlantic District**

of The Wesleyan Church, which includes the Maritime Canadian provinces of New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, as well as the state of Maine. Because of God's favor, these churches have been able to bless their communities in some remarkable ways.

LOVE WEEK

For instance, the Kings Valley Church in Quispamsis, New Brunswick . . .

"Wow!" "That's amazing!" "Awesome!"

Those were just some of the responses to Kings Valley Wesleyan Church's LOVE WEEK. Beginning in November 2014, Pastor Brent Ingersoll challenged his congregation to give sacrificially in order to bless others. They set a goal of raising \$50,000 in one offering, but surpassed \$70,000 when all contributions were totaled.

"We wanted to say to our community, 'Because God loves us, we love you,'" the pastor said. "Because God has blessed us, we want to bless you." LOVE WEEK has given the church considerable credibility in the city and community. By far the largest church in the area, Kings Valley has topped 1,000 in worship attendance, up from 600 just three years ago. "LOVE WEEK shows we're not just a big club of Christians but people who care about the community," Pastor Ingersoll said.

Among the recipients of the church's generosity were elementary schools, a pregnancy resource center, a shelter for homeless youth, a men's shelter, and other local agencies. Some of the gifts were in the \$5,000 to \$10,000 range. No wonder the recipients were amazed! They placed no strings on the money.



"We **trust** your leadership," church leaders said,
"and the gifts can be used in any way **you choose**."

In addition, the congregation logged 1,300 person-hours in a seven-day period, picking up trash in community parking lots, handing out free coffee, stacking firewood, ministering in a nursing care center, and in other ways. They also surpassed the goal of 500 shoeboxes packed and donated for Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan's Purse, which blesses children overseas with Christmas gifts.

In the weeks since the LOVE WEEK offering, regular giving has increased. "This became a hinge point for people who were locked into a certain level of giving," the pastor said. "Lots of people were blessed because they gave sacrificially."



Watch Video
vimeo.com/112534798

SINGLE MOMS

God's blessings are not confined to large churches. For instance, the Central Nova Wesleyan Church in Truro, Nova Scotia, a congregation of about 100 in attendance, is actively involved with young mothers.

"It's amazing how many people have been scared about church," April Banks, director of Baby-N-Me at the Central Nova Church, said. "But we have people coming to church who are not afraid anymore, because they know we will

Many single mothers have been referred to Baby-N-Me by social services, by a transient home for battered women, by the mayor, and even by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Baby-N-Me is totally funded by donations from the church.

"Our kids' programs have grown dramatically," April said, "because many of the mothers have begun attending church and bringing their children. We have connected with over 300 different women in the past five years."



We have **connected** with over 300 different **women** in the past five years."

be there." "We" means April and others who work with the Baby-N-Me ministry, building relationships and meeting the needs of mothers with young children.

Several years ago, April and her husband Rev. Ken Banks, pastor of the church, were looking for a way to reach out to mothers in need. They began providing bags of clothing, bags of diapers, wipes, and other essentials, and engaging them in conversation and befriending them.

One young mother had two children and another on the way when she began coming to Baby-N-Me. She had no family to help her, her unemployed boyfriend depended on her to support him, and social services was threatening to take her children because of the boyfriend's abusiveness. Initially she was reluctant to come to Baby-N-Me because of a bad experience with a church in the past.

"She was really scared when she first came," April said, "and didn't open up for a long time." But the church befriended her and convinced her she could make it on her own. She went back to school, got a job, and is now supporting herself and her daughters.

Women receive a listening ear, a loving relationship, and prayer when they turn to Baby-N-Me.



GREEN HOUSE

The Corbett Avenue Church in Fredericton, New Brunswick, has experienced God's favor in what they are calling "the miracle of the little green house."

"What about that house? That one, right there?"

District Superintendent Dr. H. C. Wilson stood at a window in the Corbett Avenue Church and pointed to a green house that stood nearby. He

and the pastor, Rev. A. J. Plaizier, had been discussing the church's need for space. It needed land to facilitate more parking and provide a new entrance to the property.

The discussion had arisen out of the church's encounter with the district's Maximizing Impact Team. They were talking about how Corbett could make it to the next level.

There was no reason to think the green house was for sale. It just seemed like the logical place for the expansion the church needed.

Later the pastor's wife, Julia, was searching the Internet for properties around town when she came across a notice that the adjacent green house was in fact for sale. But because the snow was four feet deep, no realtor's sign had been posted. After prayer and discussion with the local board, the pastor approached a realtor. Within a few weeks, he went to the district camp with the keys to the

We are taking
new ground ...



house in his hands. Dr. Wilson's comment was, "Isn't that just the way the Master works!"

Since that time, the church has gotten \$20,000 ahead of schedule in paying off the mortgage. "The house really wasn't the point," said Pastor Plaizier. "It's what God is doing for us, in us, and through us that really counts. Having God bless us like that has really given our church a shot in the arm. We are taking new ground—literally and spiritually!"

More than fifty new people are attending, particularly young families and single mothers. Women, who themselves have had experiences with single mothering, have volunteered to help reach these young mothers.

SACRED SPACE

Meanwhile, the Deep Water Church in Halifax, Nova Scotia, which is only seven years old, has bought and refurbished a 100-year-old former church.

“We have re-consecrated the church building and now it is being used for the purpose for which it was originally intended,” said Pastor Jon Stephens of the Deep Water Church. The original Disciples of Christ building was sold to a man some thirty years ago who then lived in it and renovated the auditorium to become a dance studio. When he decided to sell it last year, although he had other offers, he chose to sell it to Deep Water because he liked the idea of a church group using it as sacred space.

The congregation, which started in the fall of 2007, meets in a movie theatre in a shopping mall on the south end of town near the universities, and that location is ideal for college students and young professionals. Parking is also available in the mall’s underground facility.

The newly purchased 100-year-old church building is located in the north end in the heart of Halifax’s artistic community. The area has locally-owned, unique restaurants. Deep Water, while adding flat screens and other updates, has kept the original chandeliers and the woodwork to retain much of the historic character and sacred atmosphere. The worship style resonates with young families and young adults in the neighborhood, who worship there on Saturday evenings.

The north-end location includes a small café next to the church. Three apartments and an office space are part of the property. The ground floor apartment is to become a space for children’s ministry. Launch of Sunday morning services, complete with children’s ministries, is to be in the fall of 2015.

Deep Water Church, in its seven-year history, had never had a facility for a traditional Christmas Eve service. This past Christmas Eve when they opened the doors at the north site, the sanctuary quickly filled. The north location



The **sacred space** draws families and young adults for **Saturday services**.

also conducts a Friday morning play group for newborn-to-school-age children with an opportunity for parents to connect.

The congregation in the movie theatre will continue to meet, giving the church multiple locations to reach the different communities. At present, between the two locations, they are seeing nearly 300 in weekend worship attendance.



SOLAR ENERGY

At the Cornerstone Wesleyan Church in Hammonds Plains, Nova Scotia, leaders found they could engage the community in a different way—by converting to solar energy.

Formerly, they spent \$16,000 a year on electricity, mostly for heat. Cornerstone was determined to find a less expensive, more environmentally friendly way to operate. They installed heat pumps, which enabled them to save about half their heating costs. But they are going further. In April, they are installing solar panels on the church roof. By doing this, they will produce more electricity in the summer than they use. They will sell it to the utility company and buy it back in the winter at a reduced rate. Over time, they expect to save and produce enough energy to cover the majority of their own usage plus their payments to Wesleyan Investment Foundation (WIF) for the loan that covered the utility conversion effort. They are the first church east of Ontario to adopt such a solar project.



Beyond **conservation**, the project leads to new **conversations**.

Pastor Denn Guptill planted Cornerstone nearly 21 years ago, and he is there today. For the first ten years, attendance averaged well under a hundred, but a loan from WIF enabled them to erect a new building and provided impetus for growth. Approaching the tenth anniversary of their building, they now see 300 persons in worship each weekend.

Pastor Guptill sees three major benefits to their project: 1) better stewardship of the earth, 2) better stewardship of their finances, and 3) a better witness to their community, which is environmentally aware.

Thousands of people drive by their church every day. Pastor Guptill says, “When they see our roof covered with solar panels, it will make a favorable impression in the community. It will start conversations that could have eternal consequences!”



Love requires action. Whether by engaging in “Love Week,” reaching out to single mothers, or relocating ministry in a shopping mall, **Atlantic District churches are going beyond their four walls and pursuing relationships with people who need Jesus.**



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THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The **International Conference of The Wesleyan Church** (ICWC) convened in Orlando, Florida, January 11-13. Following a parade of flags representing more than 90 nations, Dr. Delia Nüesch-Oliver, area director for Latin America for the Free Methodist Church, gave a keynote address.

Dr. Alberto Patacsil, General Superintendent of The Wesleyan Church of the Philippines, presided over business sessions. **A very significant resolution granted conditional approval of the formation of the Established General Conference [Canada]. There are 120 Wesleyan churches in Canada, with 8,300 members and weekly attendance totaling over 14,000.**

Delegates were offered numerous seminars such as ministering in Muslim regions, engaging disaster relief, and finding the pathway to global Wesleyan interdependence. **Rev. Joel Cumberbatch**, General Superintendent of The Wesleyan Holiness Church of the Caribbean, and **Dr. Richard Waugh**, Regional Superintendent of the South Pacific Regional Conference, provided spiritual insights. A prayer service highlighted stories of amazing ways in which God is moving globally.

The 2019 International Conference will be held in Barbados, West Indies.

THE GATHERING 2015 #g15clergy

The Gathering, an event held every four years for pastors and spouses of The Wesleyan Church, set a new mark in attendance at 2,300. Held in Orlando, Florida, in January, The Gathering was designed to encourage, inspire, and engage.

General Superintendent **Dr. Jo Anne Lyon** said, **“It was an incredible event. I heard over and over that pastors felt ‘cared for.’ The countless hours and prayers of so many people were blessed by God and multiplied over and over in the lives of the pastors and spouses.”** She further remarked that the ripple effect will be felt exponentially across the church.

Key speakers and special guests included Joel and Becky Hunter, Kevin Myers, John Maxwell, Bob Roberts, Joanne Solis-Walker, Ken Murphy, Kyle Ray, Kevin and Sherry Harney, and Todd and Sonja Burpo. Over 60 seminar presenters offered sessions, and higher education gatherings, mini-retreats, district fellowships, and other receptions took place.

For many pastors, the family atmosphere, the reuniting of friendships, and the important ministry connections gave the trip great worth. 🙌



IWU RECOGNIZED AS A TOP NATIONAL ONLINE COLLEGE

Indiana Wesleyan University has been recognized as one of the U.S.'s Best Online Colleges 2014 by Best Value Schools (BVS), a leading resource for online learning and college affordability information. IWU ranked 2nd of 30 online colleges and universities listed. Data is collected on several indicators, including freshmen retention rate (IWU: 80%), student-to-faculty ratio (15:1), and graduation rates (65%). IWU scored 823 of a possible 875 points.

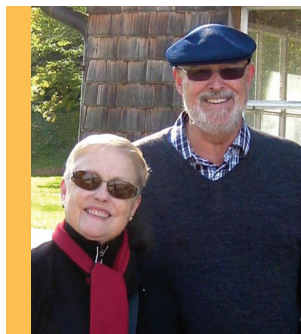
OKLAHOMA WESLEYAN ALUMNA WINS TEACHING AWARD

Rachel Hammon, a 2008 graduate of Oklahoma Wesleyan University, was named Teacher of the Year for Creekwood Elementary School in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. Hammon has worked at Creekwood for three years and was chosen by her peers for the award. The superintendent of Broken Arrow Public Schools described her as a "teacher who displays qualities of leadership and innovation." Hammon earned a Bachelor of Arts in Music and a Bachelor of Science in Music Education K-12 at Oklahoma Wesleyan.



Houghton student helps pass \$10 million spending bill in Washington


Houghton College senior Moeun Sun helped pass a U.S. House of Representatives spending bill to allocate \$10 million of the House's spending to local and regional procurement of food. She also contributed to the annual Hunger Report, circulated nationwide and in Congress. Sun is double majoring in international development and business administration.



THE WESTFALLS WELCOMED AS NEW PASTORS-IN-RESIDENCE AT SWU

Southern Wesleyan University welcomed Dr. Karl Westfall and Rev. Sharon Butcher Westfall as pastors-in-residence. Retired after nine years as district superintendent of the Northwest District, Karl has also pastored churches in the western U.S. and Indiana, and partnered with Global Partners, the missions arm of The Wesleyan Church. Karl will mentor religion students and division faculty while teaching. He and Sharon will mentor couples involved with Global Partners. Sharon will work with SWU's division of religion and for the Center for Women in Ministry.





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STEPHEN LENNOX EMERGES AS THE CANDIDATE IN KINGSWOOD UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH

Dr. Stephen Lennox is the unanimous choice for the presidential candidate of the Kingswood University Presidential Search Committee. The presumptive nominee, Dr. Lennox would assume duties this year. The presidential vacancy was created by Dr. Mark Gorveatte's resignation, who will complete five years of able service.

A Houghton College graduate, Dr. Lennox is a recognized scholar, ordained minister, teacher, leader, and faithful churchman. He has been a beloved Bible professor at Indiana Wesleyan University for 22 years. He has pastored Wesleyan churches and also taught at United Wesleyan College and Evangelical School of Theology.



Obituaries

ADAMS, REV. CHARLES JACKSON "JACK" (89)

Rev. Charles Jackson "Jack" Adams lived in Spring Hill, Fla. He served as an ordained minister in the North Carolina East District and pastored churches in Michigan, Indiana, and Maryland. Rev. Adams also served in higher education at Indiana Wesleyan University and Southern Wesleyan University. He is survived by Ialene, his wife of 66 years, one daughter, one son, eight grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, one sister, and two brothers.

BERRY, REV. WELDON ATWOOD, JR. (85)

Rev. Weldon Atwood Berry, Jr., lived in Conyers, Ga. He served as an ordained Wesleyan minister primarily in the Delmarva (Chesapeake) District, but also in Michigan, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Georgia. He is survived by his wife, Anna M. Berry, four sons, eight grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, and one sister.

BITTNER, REV. VIOLA (88)

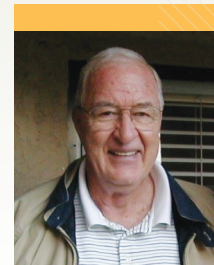
Rev. Viola Bittner lived in Osgood, Ind. An ordained minister with The Wesleyan Church, she pastored in Illinois and Indiana. She also served in children's ministry and as an evangelist. Her husband, William, preceded her in death, along with one brother and one sister. Survivors include one stepdaughter.

DEKKER, REV. PAUL W. (82)

Rev. Paul W. Dekker lived in Madison, Ala. A former Wesleyan missionary, pastor, and general evangelist, Rev. Dekker met his wife DonaMae while both were students at Houghton College. He began pastoring in Michigan in 1957 and from 1958-1970 he and his wife served with Wesleyan World Missions (WWM) in Sierra Leone, Africa, at Kamakwie Hospital.

The couple joined Skyline Wesleyan Church (now in La Mesa, Calif.), and Rev. Dekker became an ordained minister with The Wesleyan Church in 1974. Later, the two began traveling worldwide, having formed their own evangelistic ministry. They also became general evangelists with The Wesleyan Church.

Survivors include his wife Dona, one daughter, one son, six grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.



Obituaries

BURLINGAME, REV. VICTORIA "VICKI" (58)

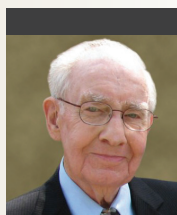
Rev. Victoria "Vicki" Burlingame lived in Byrnedale, Penn. She became an ordained minister with The Wesleyan Church through the FLAME program. She was preceded in death by her father and two brothers. Survivors include her husband, John ("Greg"), her mother, stepfather, stepmother, three sons, two daughters, five brothers, and four sisters.

DENNIS, DR. MARVIN (71)

Dr. Marvin Dennis lived in Janesville, Wisc. He served as a pastor for 46 years, as well as an evangelist and chaplain. He pastored churches in New Jersey, Kansas, Wisconsin, and Nevada. Survivors include his wife, Shelley, one daughter, two stepsons, six grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

HOBBS, REV. ARCHIE HOBBS (77)

Rev. Archie Hobbs lived in Woodruff, S.C. He pastored in both the North Carolina East and South Carolina districts a total of 25 years. Survivors include his wife, Charlotte, one daughter, three sons, two sisters, one brother, and five grandchildren.



JEFFRIES, REV. WALTER (90)

Rev. Walter Jeffries lived in Westerville, Ohio. He was an ordained minister with The Wesleyan

Church and served as a pastor for 25 years before becoming district superintendent of the Western Ohio District from 1971-1989. Rev. Jeffries also served on the board of trustees of Indiana Wesleyan University. He is preceded in death by his wife of 66 years, Charlotte, a son, a daughter, and two sisters. His second wife Alma died on February 18, 2015. He is survived by two sisters, three grandchildren, and one great granddaughter.

MCMURPHY, REV. DR. JOHN (61)

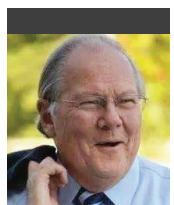
Rev. John McMurphy was an ordained minister in the Chesapeake District and was involved for many years in curriculum development with the David C. Cook Publishing Company. He also taught at colleges in Virginia and North Carolina. He is survived by his wife Kay, two sons, and four grandchildren.



OSBORNE, REV. WILLIAM (86)

Rev. William Osborne lived in Hamilton. An ordained minister with

The Wesleyan Church, he served on the administration of the district board of supervision for 30 years, 25 years as an assistant district superintendent, and 25 years as chairman of the district board of ministerial standing. Those who preceded him in death include Sally, his wife of 65 years, one son, and a granddaughter. Survivors include two sons, one daughter, eight grandchildren, two brothers, and one sister.



SCRUGGS, REV. DARRELL (68)

Rev. Darrell Scruggs lived in High Point, N.C. An ordained minister with

The Wesleyan Church, he served as office administrator for the North Carolina East District and pastored Why Not Wesleyan Church in Seagrove. In all, he served with The Wesleyan Church for 45 years. He was preceded in death by his sister. Survivors include his wife, Naomi, one son, one daughter, three grandchildren, three brothers, and one sister.

SHEA, REV. ALTON JAMES (101)

Rev. Alton James Shea lived in Houghton, N.Y. Rev. Shea and his wife, Aileen, served The Wesleyan Church together for over 60 years. Rev. Shea graduated from Houghton College, was ordained in 1940 and served Wesleyan congregations throughout New York. The Sheas also served as Wesleyan missionaries to Sierra Leone, West Africa, giving seven years in gospel radio production in several African languages. Their lifelong ministry embraced preaching, evangelism,

singing, chalk art, pastoral work, and gospel radio. All three of their children served as long-term missionaries in West Africa.

Shea was preceded in death by his wife Aileen, four sisters, and two brothers. Survivors include two sons, one daughter, five grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren, and one sister.

STONE, REV. WILLARD (82)

Rev. Willard Stone lived in Colton, S.D. A former educator, he began pastoring with the Wesleyan Methodist Church, and later became an ordained minister. He later served as a hospital chaplain. He was preceded in death by one sister. Survivors include Beatrice, his wife of 59 years, two sons, nine grandchildren, one step-grandchild, three great-grandsons, and one sister.

STOREY, REV. DR. JAMES "JIM" (76)

Rev. Dr. James "Jim" Storey lived in Anderson, Ind. An ordained minister, he attended Frankfort Pilgrim College. He pastored both Wesleyan and Nazarene churches and served in Iowa, Maryland, and Indiana. Survivors include his wife, Rebecca, four sons, six grandchildren, and one brother.



WALKER, REV. RON (79)

Rev. Ron Walker lived in Fort Gratiot, Mich. He served 42 years as an ordained minister with

The Wesleyan Church, pastoring churches in Michigan. He also served as district superintendent of the Wisconsin District from 1993-1998. Survivors include Eunice, his wife of 59 years, three sons, one daughter, 12 grandchildren, and one brother.

WISE, REV. GEORGE WILBUR (89)

Rev. George Wilbur Wise lived in Columbia, S.C. He was a U.S. Army veteran of World War II and an ordained minister with The Wesleyan Church. His wife, Margaret, and a daughter both preceded him in death. Survivors include one son and two brothers.



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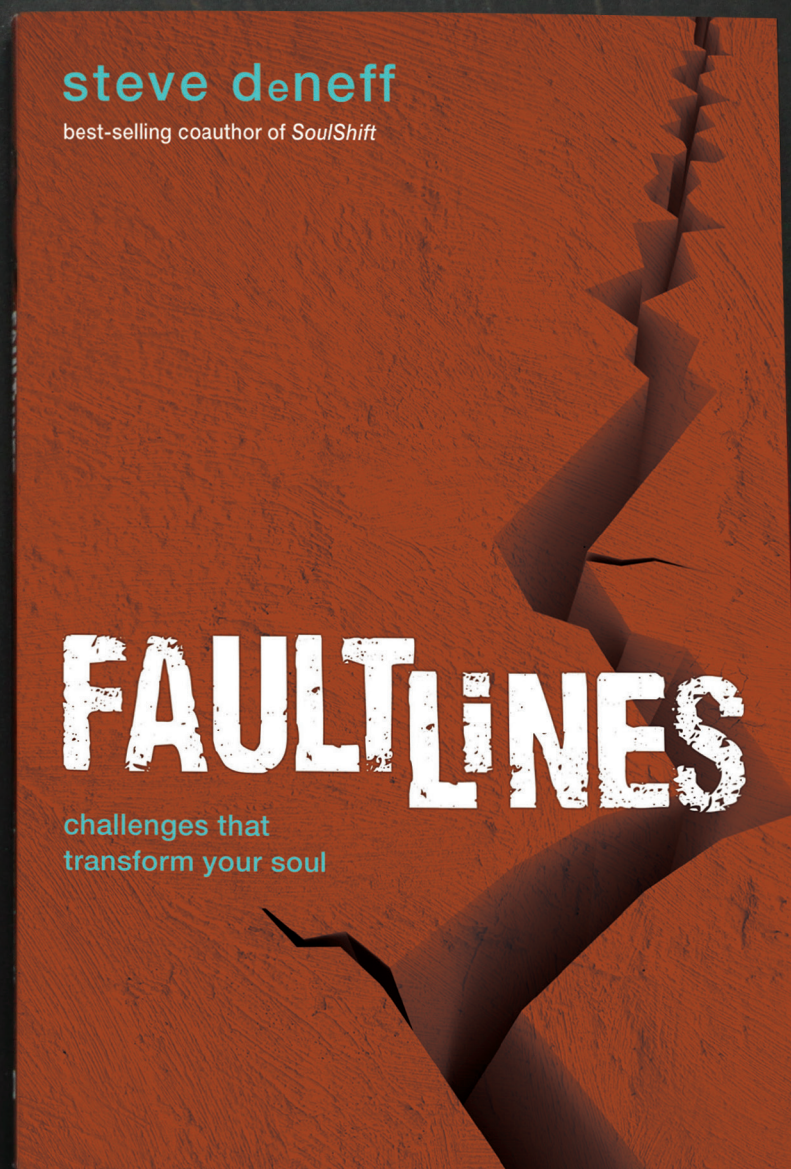


Break through spiritual hardness.

SoulShift coauthor Steve DeNeff reveals to both the young and veteran in faith how soul-growing transformations happen only as God breaks through spiritual hardness. These moments are life's "fault lines," and they are periods of great upheaval—always disruptive, always unfair, always troublesome, but not always bad.

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