

USING EASY TECH TO RESURRECT WESLEY'S CLASS MEETING

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WHAT WILL WE LEARN TODAY?

- History and update on Wesley's Class Meeting
- How to add these to your local church.
- What are the technology requirements to increase accessibility?
- How can you mess this up?
- What are the fruits of a successful Class Meeting?
- Putting this into practice, NOW.

WHAT WILL I BE ABLE TO DO BY THE END OF THIS SESSION?

- Each of you will be able to organize a Class meeting within your context.
- You will be introduced to what we believe is the best platform to do this electronically.
- You will be able to offer the Class meeting in an:
 - E-format
 - Knee to knee format
 - A combined format
- This whole process can be started in less than a month at your church!

WE NEED TO START WITH "WHY"

- Is there a functional need to know mission/vision statement of the UMC in your context?
- What is the systematic way that is lived out within your context or local church?
- How is that working?
- With all the declines we can list, the "why" is obvious
- I think we know the Why, we don't know the How.
- Uniquely this is not about knowing more or learning more. It is about being more and doing more....

THIS IS NOT NEW. THIS IS NOT UN-TESTED. THIS IS SCIENCE, BUT NOT ROCKET SCIENCE

- The idea of these meetings began in England, and were originally planned to answer Wesley's 3rd Rule- The following of the Ordinances of God- specifically \$\$\$
- In the colonies, when this began, there were no clergy as we think of them today.
- We did not begin as a denomination. Wesley did not wish that to happen.
- His idea was to reform the Church of England
- So this began as a movement
- It spread like wildfire in "the colonies"
- Then came the Revolutionary War

WHAT ARE THE REASONS/EXCUSES WHY FOLKS DON'T WANT TO BE IN A SMALL GROUP?

- Time, time, and also, I just don't have time....
- Travel back to another location
- Find food on the way
- "The last thing I need after work is another meeting."
- Safety- "I don't think I (we, they) can be honest with the typical small group."
- "I don't think I agree with the content of most studies."
- Much of this can be solved with technology...simple technology

THIS IS NOT EXPENSIVE. YOU MAY ALREADY HAVE WHAT YOU NEED TO ACCESS THIS.... IN YOUR POCKET....

- Conference calls don't work. We began to schedule e-meetings of leaders within our work at GCUMM.
- We began an experiment with "deployed staff" and how we might manage them.
- We tried nearly every version and brand of platform.
- Some washed out in the 'free trial' of our testing. Others were too complex for the average person to use.
- Some just didn't work.
- Martha Davis, our COO discovered Zoom.us.

MORE ON ZOOM, REMEMBER THIS IS A "CLOSED" MEETING....

- The day of the week and the time of the meeting is set with input from the group.
- An invitation is sent out to the group electronically for the first meeting - it is set as a recurring meeting.
- When you accept the invite, the meeting is added to your calendar on your computer/phone/tablet.
- You will also get a reminder from your calendar on the day of the meeting.
- At the time to begin the meeting, you click on the link on the invitation and you join the meeting with audio and video (you can join by phone only, you can also turn off the mic and video.)

WHY START WITH KEVIN WATSON'S BOOK?

- It is a great history which most members of our church don't know.
- It gives useful information about Wesley's theology.
- It gives great examples of how that theology should be lived out.
- It uses an image of getting into the house of God that outlines our journey.
- It gets everyone on the same page.
- It is the unifying context for the group.

DEFINITIONS OF THE TARGET- WHO SHOULD BE AT THE TABLE?

- There needs to be a "leader" in the group to get through the book, and beyond.
- If you want this to spread in your local church, multiple groups should be started to include as many as possible.
- I prefer gender specific groups.
- I would suggest that folks who have leadership roles in your context, may not need to be the leader of a group.
- Diversity helps.
- Pastors may want a diverse group of pastors.

LET'S TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO LOOK AT THE BOOK

- The first two chapters provide what the group is and isn't and some history of the Methodist Revival.
- Chapter 3 gives us the Theological Foundation for the Class Meeting
- Chapter 4 helps us return to that Wesleyan model
- Chapters 5 and 6 give us a picture of the whole meeting, and the role of the leader.
- Chapter 7 illustrates how to mess this up.
- Chapter 8 gives us the keys to a life-changing group

IN WORKING WITH FOLKS WHO HAVE READ THE BOOK...

- They all liked it but...
- Depending on where they are spiritually or personally, or because of past experience..
- Each person in the group will find a different part MOST helpful.
- I would not skip the book- even Kevin comments on its irony
- Again, the book is the common context for the group.

SO, AFTER THE BOOK, WHAT DO YOU DO EACH MEETING?

- Folks need to know that the book prepares you for the "Class meeting."
- Most of the groups evolve the questions they ask each week.
- Many are like an Emmaus Reunion group. The shared context is the book; rather than the retreat.
- Each meeting one or more of Wesley's questions are asked. (There are many versions)
- Each person will, based on their answers that day, have a plan to improve for the next week.

HOW DOES THIS NOT BECOME SOMETHING ELSE?

- I would not set up a Class Meeting made up of the leadership of the church.
- Diversity could include reaching folks who moved to another location for work.
- It could include folks from other churches.
- If the group is not a means to grow in our relationship with Christ, we are missing the target.
- If the group does not encourage folks to examine their behaviors, we are missing the target.

WHAT IS THE FRUIT? WHAT IMPACT DOES THIS HAVE?

- "I don't know what you do in that meeting every week and I don't need to know. But for God's sake don't stop, my husband is different, and I like the difference."
- "This is the only safe place I can talk about this."
- "Just because you lost your job and moved to New England does not mean you get to leave the group."
- "I don't think I have ever told anyone this before, but..."
- First session- "I didn't see Christ this week, which is weird as a Christian Counselor, I direct other folks to Christ....I guess I should do the same."

**YOU MEAN YOU CAN HAVE A WEEKLY MEETING
AND ALL YOU DO IS ANSWER QUESTIONS?**

- Yes
- Not only is it answering questions- it is answering the same basic questions...
- The group does grow very close.
- There is accountability without authority. It is self imposed accountability.
- It can add new members, but they need to have read the book. They may need some time with the leader and or another member, to process question they have about the book.

**WHAT ARE SOME OF THE "WESLEYAN" QUESTIONS
THAT COULD BE ASKED?**

**WHAT ARE YOUR QUESTIONS AT THIS POINT IN THE
PRESENTATION?**

LET'S DO SOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS, AND
HEAR SOME OTHER VOICES....

WHAT ARE YOUR NEXT STEPS, AND HOW COULD
WE FOLLOW UP ON THIS?
