



“E-Team E-Zine”

A “Leader’s Toolbox” of Encouragement to
Equip You for Evangelism
That Extends the Kingdom

“John Wesley’s Class Meetings”

Understanding the Methodology and Theology of a Man and Movement of God

As a leader from a Wesleyan background, one of my spiritual heroes is John Wesley. I received some of my training in schools that are foundationally Wesleyan. Yet, as I look back on those days, I realize that the majority of my education focused on Wesleyan *theology* while we spent little if any time studying Wesley’s *methodology*. D. Michael Henderson’s book is a wonderful, welcome addition to the many volumes already written about the Wesleyan movement because it helps us understand the *methodology* that flows from his *theology*. In fact, those who are doing great thinking and writing in the area of cell church ministry today point to Wesley as the one leader who truly understood those issues...a leader 250 years ahead of his time!

Henderson notes that Wesley’s “*class meeting encapsulated several of the key principles of New Testament Christianity: personal growth within the context of an intimate fellowship, accountability for spiritual stewardship, ‘bearing one another’s burdens,’ and ‘speaking the truth in love’...Wesley was able to cut through the trappings of Anglicanism and recapture the spirit of koinonia, the supportive fellowship of primitive Christianity.*”

Wesley was ahead of his time by returning to Biblical roots!

Henderson begins with his look at Wesley’s background—first the incredible influence of his parents (especially his mother) and then the people that influenced him. Out of these God-ordained experiences and relationships, Wesley forged the concepts and strategies that became his class meeting movement.

The “system of interlocking groups” was the genius of Wesley’s evangelism, discipleship and leadership development strategies. Henderson spends time looking at each of the groups:

- The Society: The Cognitive Mode
- Class Meeting: The Behavioral Mode
- Band: The Affective Mode
- Select Society: The Training Mode
- Penitent Bands: The Rehabilitative Mode

Henderson shines in his analysis of why Wesley's systems were so effective, reviewing Wesley's understanding of the balance between structured organization and flexible leadership.

How does studying the methodology (and theology) of a man who's been in heaven for over 200 years help us today? Henderson helps us understand that Wesley's adaptation of *timeless* Biblical practices and principles is very *timely* for ministry today...even in our very different context!

The strategy flowed from a singular passion...everything flowed out of Wesley's challenge to his leaders on every level: *"You have nothing to do but save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work. And so always, not only to those who want you, but to those who want you most."*

As a Wesleyan leader, it's my great hope and desire that students training for ministry would not only study books on Wesley's *theology*, but be required to study this book (and any others like it) about Wesley's *methodology*...whether the school or students are from a Wesleyan background or not! Implementing these ministry strategies in our context would make us much more effective in the Harvest!

Next edition: "Men God Gave Moses"...a Biblical example of the 'Seven Spheres of Support.'



As always, please feel free to pass along editions of these "E-Team E-zines" to others. If you'd like to have people added to this mailing list, contact me. If you have insights, feedback or questions, I'm glad to hear them. God's best to you!