

Workshops Attended

Living the United Methodist Way: Turning the World Upside Down

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Living the United Methodist Way: Turning the World Upside Down was a phenomenal event. I truly appreciate the opportunity to attend this event. I was both inspired and challenged by the speakers and workshop presenters. Here is a summary of the workshops I attended.

The Prophetic Role of the Pastor with R. Clayton Childers (GBOD)

In this workshop, participants explored what it means to preach prophetically. The group came up with a number of ways that we as pastors speak prophetically including the following:

- By being bold
- By appealing to authorities or those older than us
- By appealing to the roots of the congregation
- By asking questions
- By appealing to scripture
- By taking time to be flexible and not sticking simply to our own agendas
- Through prayer
- By asking someone else to come in and preach those times a prophetic word is needed but when it seems like the congregation will not hear that word most effectively from us

After discussing our own ideas about prophetic preaching, we discussed the ways in which John Wesley was prophetic in both his preaching and his writing. Some of the topics John Wesley discussed were war, colonialism, ecology, religious tolerance, reason, racism and the legal system, work ethic, wealth and inheritance, the ministry of women, separation of church and state, love of neighbor, and peace and justice. For each of these topics, we discussed a particular writing John Wesley had written.

Making Numbers Make Sense: Using Data to Evaluate Ministry with Scott Brewer (GCFA)

This workshop sought to explore the ways that data aids the United Methodist Church. The GCFA has been working to remove data questions that are perhaps interesting but not important. Data (numbers) have been kept in the United Methodist Church since the early days of Methodism (ex. how many preachers, how many members in societies, etc.).

Statistics (according to Scott)...

- “A means of communicating and tracking performance through normative measurement.”
- “Although it does not tell the whole story, it tells a similar story the same way.”
- “Although base standard is set by GCFA, additional data can be collected at the discretion of the annual conference.”

- “Data is collected annually as a denomination, may be collected more regularly by a conference.”
- “There is no one, right way to analyze your data...except as a means of making predictions.” (which Scott feels is a bad way to use data)
- “Should be collected online.”
- “Should be connected and compared to previous years’ data.”
- “Should be reviewed by DS and pastor as part of the supervisory process.”
- “Should be part of the goal setting and performance review process.”
- “Should be used to inform decision-making by local churches.”

For churches, districts, conferences, GCFA is willing to help with the process of collecting data. There are resources that may be tapped into (many times for free) at the following website:
www.gcfa.org/data_resources.html.

The Challenge of Globalization and Its Impact on the Poor with Clayton Childers (GBOD)

In this workshop, participants learned that globalization is not really a new problem. For example, the Roman Empire ruled all the roads and sea ports at one point. Of course, the upside was that the gospel spread and the church grew. The great commission is found in Matthew 28. How do we take the commission seriously without impacting the poor negatively through globalization? One half of the world’s population lives on around \$2.00 a day.

There are approximately four different types of globalization.

- Ecological – water resources and air are effected by globalization. U.S. is a leading cause of air issues.
- Social – t-shirts in other countries from U.S., the various ethnic restaurants that show up around the world, American movies, tv shows shown in other countries
- International – laws among the nations – ex. Geneva Convention
- Economic – structures in place that reinforce wealthy nations at the detriment of the poor. Neo-liberalism – free trade laws; poor countries aren’t protected in these systems.

Four Areas of Ministry: Legitimate Children of the Methodist Past with Robert Williams (The General Commission on Archives and History)

This workshop looked at the four areas of focus as they relate to our Methodist history. It was an interesting workshop. Robert passed out brochures about The General Commission on Archives and History and a bibliography for aiding us in looking at the four areas historically. Beyond this, a number of photos/slides were shown. There were so many, I dare not try to name what they all were! In any case, Robert encouraged us to feel free at any time to visit or contact the commission (housed at Drew University) anytime.