John Wesley (1703-91) founded the Methodist movement that began in Great Britain in the eighteenth century.
Participants in this movement were called “Methodists” because Wesley followed a methodical plan of spiritual growth and individual transformation that led to personal responsibility and social change.

The Methodist movement grew and its influence significantly changed the living conditions of poor people in England during the 18th century.
Some definitions of Wesleyan terms

- Wesley used “perfection”, “holiness”, and “sanctification” interchangeably to refer to the process of growing to be everything God wants us to be.

- Wesley used the term “Social Holiness” to describe the process of changing laws and developing institutions that more closely resembled God’s Kingdom that Jesus announced.

- Wesley’s term “Social Holiness” and the contemporary term “Social Justice” are equivalent.
This Presentation will include:

- History of the Wesleyan movement
- Wesley’s theological plan
- Implications for programs of ministry, service, and Holiness
THE WESLEYAN MODEL OF SPIRITUALITY AND SOCIAL HOLINESS

History of the Wesleyan movement

- The social conditions of Great Britain in the Eighteenth Century
- The societal issues addressed by John Wesley
- The impact of the movement on Great Britain
JOHN WESLEY

- 15th child of Samuel and Susanna Wesley
- Graduate of the University of Oxford
- An ordained Anglican priest
- Theologian, Scholar, Evangelist, and Executive Director of the Methodist movement
- Died - 2 March 1791, in London, England at age 87
Wesley’s birthplace, Epworth, is marked with a red dot.
Newspaper Headlines:

- Jobless Rate Goes Up 6th Year in a Row
- Demonstrations and Riots over Job Loss
- Military Veterans Come Home to No Benefits
- Changing Economy Threatens Middle Class
- Tax Structure Unfair
- Terrorists Attack Troops on Holy Day
- Health Care System Failing
In the 18th Century (1701-1799) Great Britain was involved 11 wars:

- The War of Spanish Succession
- The War of the Triple Alliance
- King George’s War (1740-48, North America)
- The Scots Rebellion in support of ‘Bonnie Prince Charlie’
SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN 18TH CENTURY GREAT BRITAIN

- Wars (continued)
  - Colonial wars in India leading to British domination of India
  - The “French and Indian War” in North America
  - The American Revolution, which led to war with France and Spain
  - The Anglo-Dutch War
  - The French Revolution and war with France
  - The Irish Rebellion under Wolfe Tone
Great Britain becomes a military state and needs:

- Men (young and not so young)
  - More men needed than England could provide
  - Veterans return with no benefits and there is no system of providing help for wounded veterans
- Ships
- Guns, gun power, and ammunition
- Uniforms
Industrial Revolution is beginning

- Flying shuttle loom introduced
- 1742 cotton factories established
- 1758 ribbing machine introduced for manufacture of stockings for men and women
- Steam engine is improving and becoming the major source of power in factories
SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN 18TH CENTURY GREAT BRITAIN

- Profound impact on individuals
  - Rural families moved to cities to work in factories
    - Most lived in slums without medical care
  - New factories produced cheaper products which put skilled workers out of work
  - Gap between rich and poor widens
  - Exploitation of workers in dangerous factories
    - men, women, and children work 10 to 12 hours a day, 7 days a week
SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN 18TH CENTURY GREAT BRITAIN

- There were no free public schools so the poor had no access to education
- Prison conditions were horrible
- Great differences between rich and poor
- Vast majority of people live in abject poverty
On Slavery

- Slave traders became immensely wealthy and influential in business and politics
- Quakers expelled members who had slaves beginning in 1761
- In 1774, John Wesley published a tract condemning slavery, “Thoughts on Slavery”
- Wrote another tract against slavery in 1777
On Slavery

- Wesley supported and encouraged the effort to abolish slavery
- Wesley wrote letters of support to William Wilberforce who introduced a bill to outlaw slavery each year for 26 years until slavery was outlawed in 1809
On Education

- Wesley established schools that were open to everyone
- Wesley supported the Sunday School movement which taught poor children to read the Bible
- Wesley wrote pamphlets and books
- He distributed books to Methodist families
- Wesley insisted that his traveling preachers to read books on history, theology, and sermons
On Prison Reform

- Led prison visits and brought food and clothing
- Encouraged Methodists to visit prisons
- Encouraged the prison reformers
- Wrote letters to the editor supporting prison reform which called for humane treatment, adequate food, clothing, and medical treatment
On Poverty
- Preached in the immorality of alcohol (especially gin), gambling, and developed a system of small groups that had similarity to Alcoholics Anonymous
- Called for land reform and greater employment
- Worked with the poor, preached to the poor
- Many of the poor became Methodists
- The Methodist small groups developed personal responsibility which led to stronger families
Ron Sider, professor of Theology at Palmer Seminary of Eastern University and founder of Evangelicals for Social Justice, notes that the early Christians had a well-known and well-deserved reputation for integrity and care for the weak.

Tertullian (AD 155–220), a North African Christian author, wrote, "Our care for the derelict and our active love have become our distinctive sign before the enemy...See, they say, how they love one another and how ready they are to die for each other."
Even the pagan emperor Julian the Apostate (ruled AD 361–363) acknowledged the radically counter cultural life of the early Christians: "The godless Galileans (Christians) feed not only their poor but ours" (p. 52).
Élie Halévy 1870-1937
- French historian and philosopher.
- Halévy was a noted twentieth-century historian whose six-volume *Histoire du peuple anglais au XIXᵉ siècle* (1912-47; *A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century*) is considered one of the most influential studies of modern English social history.
THE WESLEYAN MOVEMENT CHANGED ENGLISH SOCIETY

- Historian Élie Halévy 1870-1937
- In this six-volume work, Halévy forwarded the thesis that England was spared from the violent revolutions in France of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries due to the intercession of Methodism as a socially stabilizing force.
THE WESLEYAN MODEL OF SPIRITUALITY AND SOCIAL HOLINESS

This Presentation will include:

- History of the Wesleyan movement
- Wesley’s theological plan
- Implications for campus and church programs of ministry, service, and Holiness
Wesley’s “Grand Scheme of Salvation”
that called for a faith that
- is grounded in Scripture,
- guided by God through worship, prayer, and personal devotions
- transformative for individuals
- develops personal responsibility
- seeks to transform society
John Wesley believed that Christians should be guided by:

- **Scripture** must be the center of discerning God’s will
- **Tradition** – of the church
- **Reason** – using our mind to understand God’s will
- **Experience** – personal and religious experience, when guided by scripture, tradition, and reason can be helpful
WESLEY’S GRAND SCHEME OF SALVATION

- **Creation** – we are created in God’s image
- **Sin** – we have fallen short of the glory of God
- **Prevenient Grace** (the porch)
- **Repentance** – we ask for forgiveness of sins
- **Justification** (the door) – God forgives us
- **New Birth** – God grants us a changed life
- **Sanctification** (living in the house) – God gives us strength to live responsibly
Creation

- Humanity is created in God’s image
- God’s image does not mean we look like God
- God’s image means that
  - We are capable of love
  - We are important to God
  - We desire to be related to God
  - We want to respond to God’s love
Sin

- Breaking God’s covenant
- Disobeying God’s commandments
- Breaking our relationship with God
Prevenient Grace (the porch of God’s house)

- The love that God gives us before we know about God
- The love we sense from Christians
- The inward desire to find deeper meaning and purpose in following God
Repentance

- Begins with the desire to change and accept God’s love
- Is making a decision to change
- Is changing one’s attitude and behavior
- Is a turning around to chose to follow God’s will
WESLEY’S GRAND SCHEME OF SALVATION

- **Justification** or **Justifying Grace**
  (the door of the house)

- God forgives those who repent
- God removes the penalty of sin
- God restores full relationship
Those who are justified experience a “New Birth” – God empowers

- A person has a sense of being “born anew”
- A person experiences new attitudes more similar to Jesus’ disciples
- A person thinks and acts in ways more consistent with Jesus’ teaching
Sanctification or Sanctifying Grace
(living in the house)

- The process of becoming a more faithful disciple of Jesus Christ Includes:
  - Outward piety - participation in weekly worship,
  - Inward piety – personal devotions, Bible study, and spiritual growth group
  - Outward acts of mercy – action to serve others
  - Inward acts of mercy – private ways to help those in need
Sanctification

- Was central to John Wesley’s theology
- Distinctively marked the Wesleyan Movement
  - Early Methodists became known as changed people through accountability groups (classes)
    - Gamblers gave up gambling
    - Heavy drinkers gave up drinking
    - Unfaithful husbands became model husbands and fathers
    - Women became leaders in societies
    - Children were protected, cared for, and educated
Sanctification

Led to the teaching of Christian Perfection

If a mature Christian followed the model of inward and outward piety and acts of mercy, then one became a more faithful disciple able to follow God’s will more closely, then a Christian eventually be made “perfect”

Wesley taught that a Christian could become “perfect in his or her intention”
Sanctification

Christian Perfection Focused on God’s will and the teaching of Jesus

“Take up your cross and follow me”
Used the example of being unlike the Pharisees who were like tombs, looked good on the outside, but were filled with decay and death
Christians were called to be God’s people on the inside and outside
Sanctification

The dangers of the teaching of Christian Perfection:

Led some to focus on the outward signs of perfection

Led some to arrogance

Led some to “works righteousness” (the feeling that we can earn God’s salvation)
THE WESLEYAN MODEL OF SPIRITUALITY AND SOCIAL HOLINESS

This Presentation will include:

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Ron Sider cites evidence of a gap because the following values are prevalent among Christians:

- Individualism (I don’t need anyone else.)
- Relativism (“It’s all relative.”)
- Materialism (The one with the most toys wins.)
- A desire for “Cheap Grace” – easy forgiveness without consequences or transformation (a phrase from German theologian, Dietrich Bonhoffer)
- Lack of personal sacrifice (I want it all, now!)
IS THERE A GAP BETWEEN CHRISTIAN VALUES AND BEHAVIOR?

- The book: “The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience, Why Christians are Living Just Like the Rest of the World” by Rod Sider
  - Cites scandalous behavior is destroying the image of “Evangelical” Christianity
    - High rate of divorce rates among Evangelicals
    - Lack of care for the poor
    - Sexual infidelity
    - Racism
    - Physical abuse in marriage

Surveys of young adults reveal they see:
- Christians as sheltered
- Only concerned about getting people saved
- Homophobic
- Too political
- Judgmental and overly critical of minor things
Wesley’s Model is needed today

- The gap between Christian values and behavior is growing
- Many young adults do not see United Methodist Churches as empowering or transformative
- Many United Methodist Churches are not vital congregations
- Many United Methodists do not feel their church helps develop their relationship with God
He was well educated and valued education

- He read the Scripture in the original languages and studied interpretation of the texts
- His theology is articulate and clear, (rational argument was highly valued in his education)
- To the traditional basis for ethical living (Scripture and tradition) he added “reason and [religious] experience,”

- faith is not separate from reason
- He encouraged Sunday Schools for everyone
- He encouraged Higher Education
His plan of salvation and his rules for societies and classes led to

- Revitalized Christians
- Christians whose behavior improved
- Christians who were enthusiastic
- Christians who attracted others to the societies and classes

WESLEY’S MODEL IS NEEDED TODAY
He developed a model for Christian living – he was an organizer as well as a religious leader.

- His sermons were inspiring and attracted crowds.
- He had a plan for personal transformation through worship and small groups (classes and societies).
- He had a plan for continued growth of Christians.
- He encouraged societal transformation through transformed people who brought Holiness and mercy to their society.

WESLEY’S MODEL IS NEEDED TODAY
The Wesley model for the Christian life of sanctified Christians
I am no longer my own, but thine. Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt. Put me to doing, put me to suffering. Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee, exalted for thee or brought low for thee. Let me be full, let me be empty. Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal. And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, thou are mine, and I am thine. So be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.
The UM General Board of Discipleship has books about Covenant Discipleship for sale and downloadable materials that are free.

http://www.gbod.org/smallgroup/cd/
More information about Wesley’s model for spiritual growth and social Holiness

“ACCOUNTABLE DISCIPLESHIP: COVENANT DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS AND CLASS LEADERS: How to Introduce Accountable Discipleship to Your Congregation” can be downloaded at: http://www.gbod.org/smallgroup/cd/cdgroupsandclassldrs.pdf
The “John Wesley Great Experiment” is a contemporary version of John Wesley’s early morning prayer and devotion. I have used it as a Lenten program, but it is helpful at any time. Cokesbury sells the book: [http://www.cokesbury.com/forms/ProductDetail.aspx?pid=570436](http://www.cokesbury.com/forms/ProductDetail.aspx?pid=570436)
BOOKS ABOUT JOHN WESLEY

- John Wesley: Holiness of Heart and Life, by Charles Yrigoyen, Jr., Abingdon Press, 1996
- This Day; A Wesleyan Way of Prayer, by Laurence Hull Stukey, Abingdon Press, 2004
The United Methodist Board of Discipleship has many resources for “Living the United Methodist Way”

- Many resources can be downloaded from their website without charge (www.gbod.org)
  
  Click on “Living the United Methodist Way”
  
  there are many choices on the column on the left

http://www.gbod.org/site/c.nhLRJ2PMKsG/b.6125875/k.28EB/The_Basics.htm